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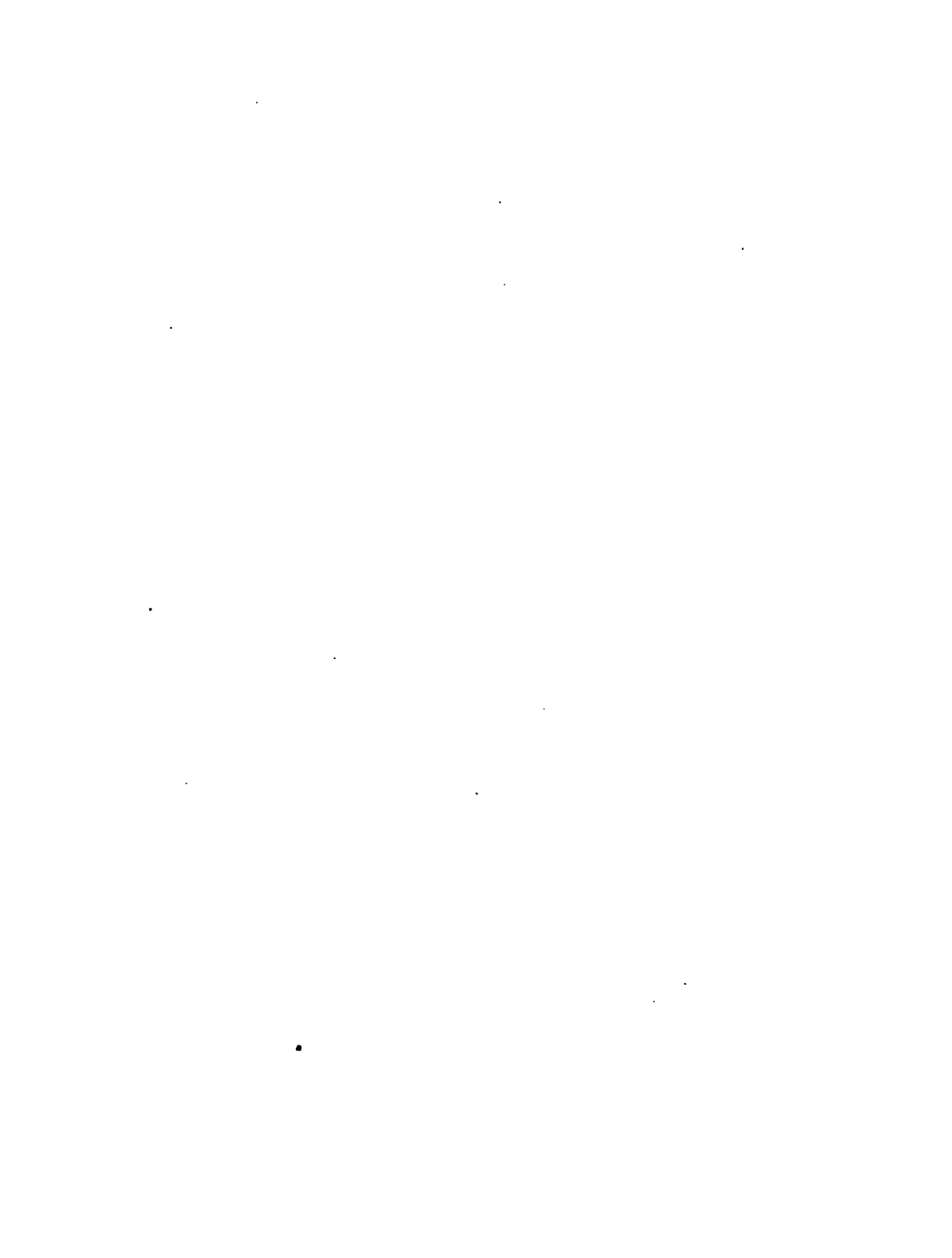




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Sir Thomas Seymour vowing fidelity to Prince Edward.

To face title, Vol. I

THE
CONSTABLE OF THE TOWER

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

BY
WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH.

Illustrated by John Gilbert.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE
Constable of the Tower.

BOOK I.

THE WILL OF HENRY VIII.

VOL. I.

B

I.

HOW THE RIGHT HIGH AND RENOWNED KING HENRY THE
EIGHTH WAXED GRIEVOUSLY SICK, AND WAS LIKE TO
DIE.

THE terrible reign of Henry the Eighth drew to a close. The curtain was about to descend upon one of the most tremendous dramas ever enacted in real life—a drama which those who witnessed it beheld with wonder and awe. The sun of royalty, which had scorched all it fell upon by the fierceness of its mid-day beams, was fast sinking into seas lighted up by lurid fires, and deeply stained by blood.

For five-and-thirty years of Henry's tyrant

sway, no man in England, however high his rank, could count his life secure. Nay, rather, the higher the rank the greater was the insecurity. Royal descent, wealth, power, popularity, could not save the Duke of Buckingham from Henry's jealous fears. Truly spake the dying Wolsey of his dread and inexorable master—"Rather than miss or want any part of his will or appetite, he will endanger the loss of half his realm. Therefore, be well advised what matter ye put in his head, for you shall never put it out again." Henry was prone to suspicion, and to be suspected by him was to be doomed, for he was unforgiving as mistrustful. His favour was fatal; his promises a snare; his love destruction. Rapacious as cruel, and lavish as rapacious, his greediness was insatiable. He confiscated the possessions of the Church, and taxed the laity to the uttermost. The marvel is, that the iron yoke he placed upon his subjects was endured. But he had a firm hand, as well as a strong will. Crafty as well as

resolute, he framed laws merely to deride them and break them. He threw off the Pope's authority in order to make himself supreme head of the Church. Some were executed by him for maintaining the Papal supremacy, others put to death for denying certain Catholic tenets. To prove his even-handed justice, Romanists and Lutherans were linked together, and conducted in pairs to the stake. At one moment he upheld the new doctrines; on the next, he supported the old religion. Thus he used the contending parties for his own purposes, and made each contribute to his strength. The discord in the Church pleased him, though he feigned to reprove it. His councillors trembled at his slightest frown, and dared not for their heads give him honest advice. His parliaments were basely subservient, and confirmed his lawless decrees without an effort at resistance. A merciless system of religious persecution was commenced and carried out according to his changeful opinions. The fires at Smithfield were continually

burning. The scaffold on Tower-hill reeked with the blood of the noble and the worthy. The state dungeons were crowded. Torture was applied. Secret examinations were allowed. Defence was denied the accused; and a bill of attainder smote the unfortunate person against whom it was procured as surely as the axe.

The wisest, the noblest, the bravest, the best of Henry's subjects were sacrificed to his resentments and caprice. Uprightness could not save More and Fisher, nor long services and blind obedience Wolsey and Cromwell. Age offered no protection to the octogenarian Lord Darcy, and piety failed to preserve the abbots of Fountains, Rivaux, and Gervaux.

But not alone did men perish by the stern behests of this ruthless tyrant, this worse than Oriental despot, but women!—women of incomparable beauty, who had shared his couch, and had every claim upon his tenderness and compassion. But pity was not in his nature. When love was gone,

dislike and hate succeeded. Startling and almost incredible is the history of his six marriages. No parallel can be found to it save in wild and grotesque fiction. It reads like a Bluebeard story, yet, alas ! it was fearful reality. Katherine of Aragon, faultless and loving, was divorced to make way for the lovely Anne Boleyn, who, in her turn, was decapitated to give place to the restless Jane Seymour. The latter lived not long enough to weary her capricious consort, but was succeeded by Anne of Cleves, whose want of personal attraction caused the annulment of her marriage and Cromwell's destruction. Next came the bewitching Catherine Howard, who was butchered like Anne Boleyn ; and lastly, Catherine Parr, saved only from the block by her own spirit and prudence, as will be presently related. Twice was the nuptial knot forcibly untied—twice was it sundered by the axe. Pretexts for his violence were never wanting to Henry. But the trials of his luckless spouses were a mockery of justice.

The accused were prejudged ere heard. The king's pleasure was alone consulted. From his vengeance there was no escape.

When it was a question whether the beautiful Jane Seymour's life should be preserved, or that of the infant she was about to bring into the world, Henry unhesitatingly sacrificed the queen, brutally observing, "that he could readily get other wives, but might not have other children." But not only did young and lovely women suffer from his barbarity; venerable dames fared no better. Execrable was the manner in which the aged and dignified Countess of Salisbury was slaughtered.

A list of Henry's victims would swell pages: their number is almost incredible. For nearly five-and-thirty years had this royal Bluebeard ruled the land; despoiling the Church, plundering his subjects, trampling on the necks of his nobles, disregarding all rights, divorcing and butchering his wives, disgracing and beheading his ministers;

yet all the while, in the intensity of his egotism, entertaining the firm belief that he was one of the wisest and most merciful of kings, and arrogating to himself the title of Heaven's Vicar and High Minister on earth.

But the end of this monstrous tyranny approached. For months the moody monarch had shut himself up within his palace at Westminster like a sick lion in his den, and it appeared almost certain he would never quit it alive. Nothing could be gloomier than the present aspect of the court, or offer a greater contrast to its former splendour and gaiety. The pompous pageantries and shows erstwhile exhibited there were over; the sumptuous banquets and Belshazzar-like festivals, of which the monarch and his favourite attendants partook, had ceased; boisterous merriment was no longer heard—laughter, indeed, was altogether hushed; gorgeously-apparelled nobles and proudly-beautiful dames no longer thronged the halls; ambassadors and others were no more

admitted to the royal presence; knightly displays were no more made in the precincts of the palace; the tennis-court was unfrequented, the manège-ground unvisited, all the king's former amusements and occupations were neglected and abandoned. Music was no longer heard either within or without, for light inspiriting sounds irritated the king almost to madness. Henry passed much of his time in his devotions, maintaining for the most part a sullen silence, during which he brooded over the past, and thought with bitter regret, not of his misdeeds and cruelties, but of bygone pleasures.

Not more changed was the king's court than the king himself. Accounted, when young, one of the handsomest princes in Europe, possessing at that time a magnificent person, a proud and majestic bearing, and all that could become a sovereign, he was now an unwieldy, unshapely, and bloated mass. The extraordinary vigour of his early days gave promise of long life; but the pro-

mise was fallacious. Formerly he had been accustomed to take prodigious exercise, and to engage in all manly sports; but of late, owing to increasing obesity, these wholesome habits were neglected, and could never be resumed; his infirmities offering an effectual bar to their continuance. Though not positively intemperate, Henry placed little restraint upon himself in regard to wine, and none whatever as to food. He ate prodigiously. Nor when his life depended upon the observance of some rules of diet would he refrain.

Engendered in his frame by want of exercise, and nourished by gross self-indulgence, disease made rapid and fearful progress. Ere long he had become so corpulent, and his limbs were so much swollen, that he was almost incapable of movement. Such was his weight, that machinery had to be employed to raise him or place him in a chair. Doors were widened to allow him passage. He could not repose in a couch from fear of suffocation; and unceasing anguish was occasioned by a

deep and incurable ulcer in the leg. Terrible was he to behold at this period. Terrible to hear were his cries of rage and pain, which resembled the roaring of a wild beast. His attendants came nigh him with reluctance and affright, for the slightest inadvertence drew down dreadful imprecations and menaces on their heads.

But the lion, though sick to death, was a lion still. While any life was left him, Henry would not abate a jot of the sovereign power he had exercised. Though his body was a mass of disease, his faculties were vigorous as ever; his firmness was unshaken, his will absolute. To the last he was true to himself. Inexorable he had been, and inexorable he remained. His thirst for vengeance was insatiable as ever, while his suspicions were more quickly aroused, and sharper than heretofore.

But during this season of affliction, vouchsafed him, perchance, for repentance from his numerous and dire offences, there was no endeavour to re-

concile himself with man, or to make his peace with Heaven. Neither was there any outward manifestation of remorse. The henchmen and pages, stationed at the doors of his chamber during the long hours of night, and half slumbering at their posts, with other watchers by his side, were often appalled by the fearful groans of the restless king. But these might be wrested from him by pain, and were no proof that conscience pricked him. Not a word escaped his lips to betoken that sleep was scared away by the spectres of his countless victims. What passed within that dark and inscrutable breast no man could tell.

II.

OF THE SNARE LAID BY HER ENEMIES FOR QUEEN CATHERINE
PARR; AND HOW SHE FELL INTO IT.

So alarmed had been the fair dames of Henry's court by his barbarous treatment of his spouses, as well as by the extraordinary and unprecedented enactment he had introduced into Catherine Howard's bill of attainder, that when the royal Bluebeard cast his eyes among them in search of a new wife, they all shunned the dangerous distinction, and seemed inclined to make a similar response to that of the beautiful Duchess of Milan, who told Henry, "that unfortunately she had but

one head,—if she had two, one of them should be at his majesty's service."

At length, however, one was found of somewhat more mature years than her immediate predecessors, but of unimpaired personal attractions, who had sufficient confidence in her discretion, and trust in her antecedents, to induce her to venture on the hazardous step. This was Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal, then in her second widowhood; she having married, in the first instance, the eldest son of Lord Borough of Gainsborough, and, on his demise, the Lord Latimer. By neither marriage had there been children, so no obstacle was offered to her union with the king on this score. Henry espoused her, and was well satisfied with his choice. In proof of his high estimation, he appointed her Regent of the kingdom prior to his departure on the expedition to France in 1544, the year after his marriage.

So great was Catherine Parr's prudence, and so careful her conduct, that in spite of all intrigues

against her, she never lost her influence over her fickle and suspicious spouse. The queen inclined to the new doctrines, and consequently those who adhered to the old religion became her enemies. But she gave them little ground for attack, and her hold upon the king's affections secured her against their malice. Age and infirmities had subdued the violence of Henry's passions: hence Catherine had no reason to fear lest she should be superseded by some more attractive rival. Besides, she had prudence enough to keep temptation out of the king's way, and she gradually and almost imperceptibly gave a more austere character to his court and entertainments. It was at her instance, though Henry was scarcely conscious of the prompting, that the pageantries and festivities in which he had once so greatly delighted were discontinued. As Henry's ailments increased, and he became altogether confined to the palace, Catherine would fain have acted his nurse, but this Henry would not permit; and fearing his suspi-

cions might be aroused, the queen did not urge the point. But she was frequently with him, and ever ready to attend his summons. Under the circumstances in which he was placed, her discourse might have been very profitable to the king if he had chosen to listen to it; but he would brook no monition, and his sternness on one or two occasions when the attempt was made, warned her to desist. But Catherine was somewhat of a controversialist, and being well read in theological matters, was fully able to sustain a dispute upon any question that might arise, and, though she never contradicted, she not unfrequently argued with, him, yielding in the end, as was discreet, to his superior judgment.

One day, she was suddenly summoned by the king, and, accompanied by her confidante, Lady Herbert, she prepared, without any misgiving, to attend upon him.

Catherine Parr's charms were of a kind which is more fully developed in the summer of life than

in the spring. At thirty-five she was far handsomer than when she was ten years younger. Her complexion was of exquisite clearness, and her skin smooth as satin; her face was oval in form, the principal feature being slightly aquiline; her eyes were large, dark and languid in expression, with heavy eyelids over-arched by well-defined jetty brows. Her raven locks were banded over her marble forehead, and partly concealed by her rich head-dress. Her figure was tall and perfectly proportioned, full, but not over-much. Her deportment was majestic and queenly, her manner calm, collected, almost cold; but, notwithstanding her gravity of aspect and staidness of demeanour, there was something in Catherine's looks that seemed to intimate that she *could* smile, ay, and indulge in innocent merriment, when alone among her women, or unawed by her imperious spouse.

On the present occasion she was richly attired, as was her wont. A circle of gold, ornamented with diamonds, rubies, and small pearls, encom-

passed her brows. Attached to this coronet was a coif of golden wire, while an embroidered couvre-chief depending from it, completed her head-gear. Her gown was of gold damask, raised with pearls of damask silver, with a long close-fitting stomacher, and sleeves tight at the shoulder, but having loose hanging cuffs of fur, beneath which could be discerned slashed and puffed undersleeves of crimson satin. A necklace of jacinth adorned her throat, and her waist was surrounded by a girdle of goldsmith's work, with friar's knots, enamelled black. A pomander box terminated the chain of the girdle, which reached almost to the feet.

Her attendant, Lady Herbert, sister to Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, and herself a very lovely woman, was likewise richly habited in a gown of chequered tissue, fashioned like the queen's.

On Catherine's entrance into the royal presence, Henry was seated in his cumbrous chair.

Ever fond of rich habiliments, even when labouring under mortal disease, his predilections did not desert him. A gown of purple caffá damask, furred with sables, and having a border embroidered and fringed with Venice gold, was thrown over his shoulders. His overgrown trunk was enveloped in a doublet of purple satin, embroidered all over with pearls; and his lower limbs were wrapped in a mantle of black cloth of gold upon bawdkin. On his head he wore a velvet skull-cap, richly set with pearls and other precious stones. But these trappings and ensigns of royalty only served to make the sick monarch's appearance more hideous. It was dreadful to look upon him as he sat there, with his features so bloated as scarcely to retain a vestige of humanity, and his enormously bulky person. No one would have recognised in this appalling object the once handsome and majestic Henry the Eighth. The only feature unchanged in the king was the eye. Though now deep sunken in their orbits, his eyes

were keen and terrible as ever, proving that his faculties had lost none of their force.

On the king's right, and close beside him, stood the astute and learned Stephen Gardiner, who, though he had signed Henry's divorce from Katherine of Aragon, and written the famous oration *De Verâ Obedientiâ* in the monarch's behalf, was yet secretly devoted to the Romish faith, and strongly opposed to the new doctrines. Clad in his stole, scarlet chimere, white rochette, and black cassock, he wore a black skull-cap set low upon the forehead, and having flaps that covered the ears and neck. Gardiner was singularly ill favoured; very swarthy, beetle-browed, and hook-nosed. Moreover, he had wide nostrils, like those of a horse, and a hanging look. By nature he was fierce, of great boldness, extremely zealous and indefatigable, and enjoyed much credit with his royal master, which he was supposed to have employed against the reformers.

On the other side of the monarch was sta-

tioned the Lord Chancellor Wriothesley (pronounced Wrottesley), a sombre-looking man, with harsh features, and a high, bald forehead. Robed in a black gown bordered with sable fur, he had altogether the air of a grand inquisitor. As a knight companion of the Garter, he wore the George and collar round his neck. Like Gardiner, the Lord Chancellor was attached to the old faith, and bitterly, though secretly, hostile to its opponents. They both entertained the belief that on the king's death the progress of the Reformation would be arrested, and the Religion of Rome triumphantly restored; and to this end they had plotted together to remove the queen, as one of the chief obstacles to the accomplishment of their scheme. They inflamed the king's mind against her by representing to him that her majesty was in the habit of secretly perusing religious books and manuscripts prohibited by the royal decree, offering him proof, if needed, of the truth of their assertions; and Catherine herself unwit-

tingly played into their hands by the imprudence with which she discussed certain points of doctrine with her intolerant spouse, stoutly maintaining opinions adverse to his own. Made aware of this by the king's displeasure, the plotters easily fanned the flame which had been already lighted until it burst into a blaze. He uttered angry menaces, and spoke of a committal to the Tower. But he would give her one chance of retrieving herself. She was summoned, as has been stated, and on her behaviour at the interview hung her sentence.

As Catherine entered, she perceived her enemies, and feared that something might be wrong, but an appearance of unwonted good humour in the king deceived her. As she advanced and made a lowly obeisance, Wriothesley offered to raise her, but she haughtily declined the offer.

"How fares your majesty this morning?" she inquired.

"Marry, well enough," Henry replied. "We

have slept somewhat better than usual, and Butts thinks we are mending apace."

"Not too quickly, my gracious liege — but slowly and surely, as I trust," observed the physician, hazarding a glance of caution at the queen, which unluckily passed unnoticed.

"Heaven grant it be so!" exclaimed Catherine.

"Come and sit by us, Kate," pursued Henry; adding, as she placed herself on a fauteuil near him, "You spoke so well and so convincingly yesterday, that we would fain have the Lord Chancellor and my lord of Winchester hear you."

"We cannot fail to profit by her majesty's discourse," remarked Gardiner, inclining his head.

"I would what I shall say might profit you, and the Lord Chancellor likewise, for ye have both need of improvement," replied Catherine, sharply. "If his highness will listen to me, ye shall neither of you have much more influence with him, for ye give him pernicious counsel. As to you, my Lord Chancellor, a circumstance hath

been told me which, if it be true, proves the hardness of your heart, and must call down upon you his Majesty's displeasure. It is said that when Anne Askew underwent the torture in the Tower, and the sworn tormentor desisted and would not further pursue his hateful office, you yourself turned the wheel of the rack, and stretched it to the uttermost. And this upon a woman—a gentle, beautiful woman. Oh, my lord, fie upon you!”

“I will not deny the fact,” Wriothesley replied, “and I acted only in accordance with my duty in striving to wrest an avowal of her guilt from a mischievous and stubborn heretic, who was justly convicted under his majesty's statute of the Six Articles, wherein it is enacted that whosoever shall declare, dispute, or argue that in the blessed sacrament of the altar, under the form of bread and wine, there is not present really the natural body and blood of our Saviour, or that after the consecration there remaineth any substance of

bread or wine, such person shall be adjudged a heretic, and shall suffer death by way of burning, without any abjuration, clergy, or sanctuary permitted. Yet, had Anne Askew recanted her errors, and submitted herself to the king's clemency, she would doubtless have been spared."

"Ay, marry would she!" cried Henry. "The Lord Chancellor acted somewhat roughly, but I see not that he was to blame. You have no particular feeling for Anne Askew, I trust, Kate?"

"I have much sorrow for her, my liege," Catherine replied. "She died for her faith."

"Sorrow for a sacramentarian, Kate!" exclaimed the king. "Now, by holy Mary! you will next avouch that you are a sacramentarian yourself."

"Nay, my gracious liege," interposed Gardiner. "Her majesty may feel pity for the misguided, but she can never uphold perverse doctrines."

"I know not that," replied the king. "No longer than yesterday we discussed certain points

of theology together, and she denied the doctrine of transubstantiation."

"Your majesty supposed so," observed Gardiner, lifting up his hands. "It could not be."

"But I say it was," cried the king. "Whence she derived her arguments I cannot tell, but she stoutly maintained them. Are ye a heretic, Kate? Confess at once!"

"This sounds like an accusation, my liege," replied the queen, rising, "and I know whence it comes," she added, glancing at her enemies. "I will answer it at once. As the Bishop of Winchester well knows, I am of the orthodox Church, of which your majesty is the supreme head and high minister."

"And yet you deny the real presence in the Eucharist, Kate?" interrupted the king.

"I cannot believe that which I do not understand, sire," she replied.

"Ha! you equivocate!" exclaimed Henry. "It

is true ! You are infected—infected to the core—by these perverse and heretical doctrines. Since you pity Anne Askew, and deem her a martyr, you shall share her fate. My statute of the Six Articles spares none — however high in degree. Quit my presence, and enter it not again. Not a word ! Begone !”

And as he turned a deaf ear to all her entreaties, the queen was compelled to retire, and was led out of the chamber, in a half-fainting state, by Lady Herbert.

No sooner was she gone, than Gardiner and Wriothesley, who had exchanged looks of satisfaction during Henry’s explosion of rage, drew near his majesty. Doctor Butts likewise approached the king, and said,

“Beseech your majesty to be calm. These bursts of anger do you infinite hurt, and may even endanger your life.”

“God’sdeath ! man, how can I be calm under such provocation ?” roared Henry. “Things are

come to a pretty pass when I am to be schooled by my wife. I must be ill indeed if freedoms like these, which no one ever ventured upon before, can be taken with me."

"Her majesty, I am well assured, has unintentionally angered you, my gracious liege," said Butts. "She will not so offend again."

"There you are in the right, doctor," rejoined Henry, sternly. "Her majesty will not offend again."

"Do nothing hastily, sire, I implore you," cried the physician.

"Withdraw, sir," returned the king. "I have no further need of you for the present."

"I cannot blame your majesty's anger," observed Gardiner. "It is enough to move any man to wrath to find that he has been duped, and the queen has now revealed her real opinions to you. She has openly braved your displeasure, and you owe it to yourself that her punishment be proportionate to her audacity."

"Your majesty cannot oppose your own decrees," said Wriothesley, "and the queen's infraction of them can be proven. On the night before Anne Askew was taken to the stake, she received a consolatory message from the queen, and she thereupon sent a prohibited book to her majesty, which the queen hath in her possession."

"We will extirpate these heresies ere we die," said Henry; "and if but few hours are allowed us, by Heaven's grace they shall be employed in purging the land from the pest that afflicts it. It is not for nothing we have been appointed Heaven's vicar and high minister, as these heretics shall find. We will strike terror into them. We will begin with the queen. Ye shall have a warrant for her arrest. Go both of you to Sir Anthony Denny to obtain it, and bid him get the instrument impressed by the keeper of our secret stamp."

"It shall be done as your highness enjoins,"

•

said Wriothealey. "Is it your pleasure that the arrest be made at once?"

"Tarry till to-morrow, I entreat your majesty," interposed Doctor Butts, who had yet lingered, in spite of the king's order to withdraw. "Take a few hours of reflection ere you act thus severely."

"What! art thou still here, knave?" cried the king. "Methought I ordered thee hence."

"For the first time I have presumed to disobey you," replied the physician; "but I beseech you listen to me."

"If I might counsel your majesty, I would urge you to carry out your just resolves without delay," observed Gardiner. "Good work cannot too soon be begun."

"Thou art right," said the king. "Her majesty shall sleep this night—if she sleep at all—in the Tower. Get the warrant as I have bidden you, and go afterwards with a guard to make the arrest. And harkye, forget not to advise Sir

John Gage, the Constable of the Tower, of the illustrious prisoner he may expect, and enjoin him to prepare accordingly."

"Your behests shall be obeyed," said Wriothesley, scarcely able to conceal his satisfaction.;

"Sir John Gage is now in the palace, if it shall please your majesty to speak with him," said Butts.

"That is lucky," replied the king; "bring him to us without delay."

With a covert smile of defiance at the queen's enemies, Butts departed upon his errand.

As Gardiner and Wriothesley quitted the royal presence, the latter observed, in a low tone, to his companion,

"The queen is as good as brought to the block."

"Ay, marry is she," replied Gardiner, in the same tone, "if what we have done be not undone by Gage. He is like enough to try and thwart our plans. The king trusts him; and affirms that it was for his incorruptible honesty that he made

him comptroller of the household and Constable of the Tower. Gage incorruptible, forsooth! as if any man living—ourselves excepted—were incorruptible.”

“Gage’s vaunted honesty will not induce him to oppose the king,” rejoined Wriothesley. “But let him try, if he be so minded. He may as well attempt to pull down the solid walls of the Tower itself as shake Henry’s resolution. And now for the warrant!”

III.

OF THE MEANS OF AVOIDING THE PERIL PROPOSED BY SIR
THOMAS SEYMOUR TO THE QUEEN.

IN a state of mind bordering almost upon distraction, the queen returned to her own chamber, where, having hastily dismissed all her attendants except Lady Herbert, she abandoned herself to despair.

“Lost!—utterly lost!” she exclaimed, in accents of bitter anguish. “Who shall save me from his wrath? Whither shall I fly to hide me? I shall share the fate of my predecessors. I shall mount the same scaffold as Anne Boleyn and Catherine

Howard. There is no escape—none. Well do I know the king is inexorable. No tears—no entreaties will move him. Pity me, dear Herbert—pity me. Help me if thou canst, for I am well-nigh at my wits' end."

"I only know one person who might perchance help your highness in this direful extremity," replied Lady Herbert. "My brother, Sir Thomas Seymour, would lay down his life for you. He has always longed for an opportunity of proving his devotion."

"Where is Sir Thomas?" cried Catherine. "Go bring him to me straight. But no!—it may be dangerous to him to approach me now."

"Danger will never deter my brother from serving his queen," Lady Herbert rejoined. "But I need not seek him. Without tarrying for your majesty's instructions, I have despatched a page to bring him hither."

"Thou hast done wrong, Herbert," cried Catherine. "I feel I ought not to see him. And

yet to whom else can I turn? Heaven help me in my need!"

"There is no one, I repeat, upon whom your majesty can more fully rely than on Sir Thomas Seymour—that I aver," rejoined Lady Herbert. "He lives but to serve you."

"If your brother be devoted to me as you represent, Herbert, and as in truth I believe him to be," said the queen, "the greater is the reason why I should not drag him into this abyss with me. I will not see him."

"Your majesty's interdiction comes too late," said Lady Herbert. "He is here."

As the words were uttered, the arras which covered a lateral entrance to the room communicating with the ante-chamber, was raised, and Sir Thomas Seymour stood before them.

Beyond all question the handsomest and most gallant-looking personage in Henry's court—where there were many such—was the haughty Sir Thomas Seymour, younger brother of the Earl of

Hertford. Possessing a tall and stately person, Sir Thomas had a noble and highly picturesque head, as may be seen in the portrait of him by Holbein. He had the lofty forehead, the fine eyes, and the somewhat pale complexion which distinguished the Seymours; but he was the handsomest of a very handsome race, and it may be doubted whether he did not surpass in point of personal appearance his sister, the lovely Jane Seymour, to whom he bore a marked resemblance. His features were cut with extreme delicacy, but a manly character was given them by the long brown silky beard which descended midway down his doublet. Sir Thomas was in the prime and vigour of life, and of a very commanding presence, and neglected no advantages which could be afforded him by rich habiliments. He wore a doublet and hose of purple velvet, paned and cut; with a cassock likewise of purple velvet, embroidered with Venice gold and bordered with fur—and his cassock was so fashioned as to give

exaggerated breadth to the shoulder,—such being the mode at the time. His arms were a long Spanish rapier, with elaborately wrought hilt, and dagger. His hair was shorn close, in accordance with the fashion of the period, and his head was covered with a flat velvet cap, ornamented with a balise-ruby and a crimson plume. But this cap he removed in stepping from behind the arras.

Third son of Sir John Seymour, of Wolf Hall, in Wiltshire, Sir Thomas had served with great distinction in the late wars with France. In 1544—three years before the date of this history—he had been made master of the ordnance for life. High in favour with the king, and uncle to Prince Edward, heir to the throne, he would have possessed much influence and importance, had he not been overshadowed by his elder brother, the Earl of Hertford, who stood foremost in Henry's regard. Of an aspiring nature, however, equally bold and unscrupulous, Seymour was greedy of political power, and determined to have it at any

hazard and by any means. A daring conspirator; he lacked cunning and temper sufficient to mark his secret designs. His passions were fierce; his hatred undisguised; and he had many of the qualities of Catiline, with whom he was subsequently compared. Haughty and insolent to his inferiors, he was more popular with the ancient nobility of Henry's court than the Earl of Hertford, who sought by condescension to ingratiate himself with the populace. Such was Sir Thomas Seymour, then in the prime of manhood, and in the full splendour of his noble personal appearance.

On beholding him, the queen rose to her feet, and exclaimed, with almost frenzied anxiety, "Oh! you are come, Sir Thomas. What news do you bring? Has the king's wrath abated? Is there any hope for me?"

"Alas! madam," Seymour replied, flying towards her, "it grieves me to the soul to be the bearer of such ill tidings to your majesty. The king's fury is as great as ever; he will not hear a

word in your defence from Sir John Gage, who is with him now. Your enemies have prevailed against you. The warrant is ordered for your arrest—and if the peril cannot be averted, your august person will be attached, and you will be taken forthwith to the Tower.”

“Then I am wholly lost!” exclaimed Catherine. “Oh! Seymour,” she continued, in a tone of half reproach, “I looked to you for aid—but you offer none.”

“I scarce dare offer such aid as is alone in my power,” cried Seymour, almost fiercely; “yet circumstances almost seem to justify it. Say you would have me prevent it, and this warrant shall never be executed.”

“But how will you prevent it?” demanded the queen, looking at him, as if she would rend his inmost soul.

“Ask me not how, madam,” rejoined Sir Thomas. “But say you would have me die for you—and it shall be done.”

These words were uttered with such terrible significance, that Catherine could not fail to comprehend their import.

"This must not be, Seymour!" she exclaimed, laying her hand upon his arm. "You meditate some desperate design. I charge you to forego it."

"'Twere but to stay the hand of a ruthless tyrant, who is about to shed blood that ought to be dearer to him than his own. Let me go, I beseech you, madam."

"No; I forbid it—peremptorily forbid it. If the king remains inflexible, I must die. Is there no way to move him?"

"You know his flinty heart as well as I do, madam," Seymour rejoined, "and that he is inaccessible to all feelings of humanity. But I will seek to move him—though I much fear the result."

"Plead not for me to your own danger, Seymour. You may draw down the king's anger on your own head."

"No matter," replied Sir Thomas. "I will run

any risk. My life will be well lost, if, by losing it, I can profit your majesty."

"Oh! if I could obtain speech with the king once more, I should not despair of melting his heart, hard though it be!" said Catherine. "But he will not see me."

"He has given peremptory orders against your admittance," rejoined Seymour; "and the guard and henchmen dare not for their lives disobey the mandate. Yet you must see him, and that speedily—but how?—Ha! I have it!" he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, as if struck with a sudden idea. "What will you say if I bring the king to you?"

"That you have wrought a miracle," replied Catherine. "But I pray you trifle not with me, Seymour."

"I trifle not, gracious madam," rejoined Sir Thomas, earnestly. "I have strong hopes of success. But you must second the scheme. I will at once to his majesty, and represent to him that the

terrible shock you have sustained, has been too much for you; and brought you to the point of death—that you seek forgiveness from him; but as you cannot come to him, you humbly supplicate him to come to you.”

“But he will not come,” cried Catharine, with something of hope in the exclamation.

“I think he will,” said Lady Herbert.

“I am sure he will,” added Seymour. “When he appears, submit yourself entirely to him. I leave the rest to your sagacity. If you have letters about you from Anne Askew, or Joan Bocher, or any prohibited book, give them to me.”

“Here is a letter from the poor martyr, and a book of prayer, blotted with her tears,” replied the queen, giving the articles in question to Seymour, who placed them in the silken bag that hung from his girdle; “keep them for me until some happier day, or keep them in memory of me!”

“Speak not thus, madam, or you will rob me

of my courage, and I shall need it all," rejoined Seymour, kneeling, and pressing the hand she extended to him reverentially to his lips. "At some happier season, when all such storms as this have passed, I may venture to remind you of the service I am about to render."

"Fear not I shall forget it," replied Catherine, with some tenderness. "Go! and Heaven prosper your efforts!"

And with a profound obeisance, and a look of unutterable devotion, Sir Thomas withdrew.

Though Catherine was by no means so sanguine of the success of Seymour's scheme as he and his sister appeared to be, she nevertheless prepared for the part she might be called upon to play. The rest of her attendants were hastily summoned by Lady Herbert, and were informed that their royal mistress was dangerously ill. With every demonstration of grief, the weeping women gathered round the couch on which Catherine had extended herself, and would fain have offered her restora-

tives; but she refused their aid, and would not allow her physician to be sent for, declaring she desired to die. In this way full half an hour was spent—an age it seemed to the queen, who was kept on the rack of expectation.

At length, and just as Catherine's heart had begun to sink within her, a noise was heard without, and Lady Herbert whispered in her ear, "It is the king! My brother has succeeded."

IV.

HOW THE DESIGNS OF WRIOTHESLEY AND GARDINER WERE
FOILED BY THE QUEEN'S WIT.

PRESENTLY afterwards, a double door communicating with the gallery was thrown open by two henchmen, giving admittance to a gentleman usher, wand in hand, and glittering in cloth of gold and tissue, who announced the king's approach; and in another minute Henry appeared, moving very slowly and with great difficulty, supported between Sir Thomas Seymour, on whose shoulders he leaned, and a man of large frame, and such apparent strength, that he seemed per-

fectly able to lift the unwieldy monarch from the ground should he chance to stumble.

Sir John Gage—for he was the stalwart personage on the king's right—had a soldier-like air and deportment, and that he had seen service was evident from the scars on his cheek and brow. His features were handsome, but of an iron cast, and singularly stern in expression. His beard was coal-black, and cut like a spade. He was attired in a doublet of tawny-coloured satin, a furred velvet cassock of the same hue, and orange-tawny hose. He was armed with rapier and dagger, and below the left knee wore the Garter. Appointed master of the wards and Constable of the Tower in 1540, soon after the fall of Cromwell, Sir John Gage was likewise made, at a later date, comptroller of the household, and filled these important offices to the king's entire satisfaction. His rough, blunt manner, and fearlessness of speech, contrasting forcibly with the servility and obsequiousness of his other courtiers, pleased Henry, who would

brook some difference of opinion from his own, provided he was firmly convinced, as in this instance, of the speaker's honesty.

The king paused for a moment at the doorway to recover his strength, and during this interval his looks were anxiously scrutinised by Lady Herbert; but nothing favourable could be read in his bloated and cadaverous countenance. He was enveloped in a loose gown of crimson velvet, embroidered with gold, and lined and bordered with minever, and made of such length and amplitude that it concealed his swollen person. If Lady Herbert failed to discover anything but what was formidable in Henry's inscrutable countenance, she gathered hope from her brother's significant glance, and whispered in the queen's ear as she feigned to raise her, "Be of good cheer, madam. All goes well."

By the help of his supporters Henry once more put himself in motion, and advanced slowly towards the couch on which Catherine was laid, sur-

rounded by her women, and apparently almost in a state of insensibility. He was followed by Doctor Butts. The king had not gone far ere he again halted from weakness and want of breath, and, on recovering, he ordered Butts to see to the queen, and send away her noisy and wailing women.

On approaching Catherine, the physician instantly comprehended the trick put upon the king, but so far from betraying it, he lent his best aid to carry out the stratagem. Causing her to breathe at a phial, he fixed his eyes meaningly upon her as she revived, as if counselling her how to act.

"There, you are better now, gracious madam," he said.

"You waste your skill upon me, good Doctor Butts," Catherine replied, in a faint voice. "I am sinking fast. Nothing but the king's forgiveness can revive me, and that I shall never obtain. One kindly word from him would soothe my

agony and reconcile me to my fate. But since I may not see him, tell him, good sir, that I died blessing him; that I have never knowingly disobeyed him; and that to feel I have offended him, albeit unwittingly, has broken my heart."

"Madam, your words have already reached the king's ear," replied Butts, "and I doubt not will be favourably received."

"Ay, Kate," cried Henry, "I come to bid thee live."

"Your majesty here!" exclaimed the queen, slightly raising herself. "Then, indeed, I shall die content."

"Talk not of dying, Kate," rejoined he. "Our physician shall bring thee round."

"A few words from your lips, my liege, will accomplish more than all my art can effect," said Butts.

"Raise me, I pray you," said Catherine to the physician and Lady Herbert, "and let me throw myself at the king's feet to implore his pardon."

"Nay, by Our Lady, there is no need of it, Kate," cried the king, with some show of kindness. "Set me a chair beside the queen," he added, "and bring me to it. Soh, Kate," he continued, as his commands were obeyed, "ye see your error, and repent it?—ha!"

"Most truly, my gracious lord and husband," she replied. "Yet while acknowledging my fault, and humbly entreating forgiveness for it, I must needs say that I have erred from inadvertence, not design. 'Twas but a seeming contradiction of your majesty that I ventured on. I argued but to draw you forth, as well to benefit myself by your able and unanswerable expositions, as to make you forget for a while the pain of your ailment. This I did at the instigation of Doctor Butts, who will bear me out in what I say."

"That will I," cried the physician. "I counselled her highness to argue with your majesty—yea, and to contradict you—in the hope of di-

verting your thoughts from yourself, and giving you a brief respite from suffering."

"Then thou art the true culprit, Butts," cried the king. "By the rood! but that I need thee, thou shouldst pay the penalty of thy folly. Thus much thou art freely forgiven, Kate; but other matter yet remains to be explained. Art thou a sectary and sacramentarian? Hast thou received letters and prohibited books from Anne Askew?"

"Whence comes this accusation, sire?" rejoined Catherine. "From my mortal enemies the Lord Chancellor and the Bishop of Winchester. Let them prove the charge against me, and I will submit without a murmur to any punishment your majesty may choose to inflict. But I defy their malice."

"Enough!" exclaimed Henry; "thou hast removed all my doubts, and we are perfect friends again. Content thee, Kate—content thee! Thou shalt have ample vengeance on thine enemies. I swear it—on my bead!"

"Nay, I entreat your majesty be not angry with them," said the queen. "I am so happy in the restoration to your love, that I cannot harbour a vindictive thought. Pardon them, I pray of you."

"They deserve not your generosity, Kate," rejoined Henry. "But thou art not forgiven for thy share in this matter, Butts," he continued. "Look you bring the queen round quickly—look that she suffer not from this mischance—look to it well, I say."

"I have no fear now, my liege," replied Butts. "Your majesty has proved the better physician of the two. Under the treatment you have adopted, I will answer for the queen's perfect recovery."

"That is well," Henry rejoined. "Ha! what noise is that in the gallery? Who dares come ither?"

"Your majesty forgets," remarked Sir John Gage.

"Right, right, I had forgotten. 'Tis Wrioth-

ley and Gardiner. They shall see how we will welcome them. Admit the Lord Chancellor and the Bishop of Winchester, and those with them," he roared.

As the order was given, the folding-doors were again thrown open, and the two personages mentioned by the king entered, followed by a guard of halberdiers. Wriothesley held the warrant in his hand. On beholding the king, they both stopped in much confusion, perceiving at once that the tables were turned upon them.

"How now?" exclaimed the king, derisively. "Why do you hesitate? About your business quickly."

"We would fain know your majesty's pleasure ere proceeding further," said Wriothesley.

"My pleasure!" vociferated Henry. "False traitors and evil counsellors that ye are, my pleasure would be to clap ye both in the Tower, and but for her majesty's intercession, ye should be sent thither under the conduct of the very guard

ye have brought with you. Your machinations are discovered and defeated."

"Beseech your majesty to grant us a hearing?" said Gardiner.

"No, I will not hear you," rejoined the king, fiercely. "Deliver up that warrant, which was obtained on your false representation."

"I deny that it was obtained by any such means, my liege," replied Wriothesley. "Nevertheless, as is my duty, I obey your behests."

And he delivered the warrant to Sir John Gage, by whom it was instantly torn in pieces.

"Begone!" exclaimed Henry, "or I will not answer how far my provocation may carry me. Begone! and take with you the conviction that your scheme has failed—and that all such schemes are certain of failure."

And seeing that it was in vain to urge a word in their defence, the baffled enemies of the queen retired.

"Are ye content, Kate?" Henry inquired, as

soon as they were gone. And receiving a grateful response, he added, "Fear not henceforward to dispute with us on points of doctrine. We shall be ever ready for such arguments, and you have our physician's word, as you wot, that they do us good."

"Pray Heaven your highness may not suffer from the effort you have made in coming to me!" said Catherine.

"Nay, by my life, I am the better for it," Henry rejoined. "But I must quit you now, sweetheart. I have another matter to decide on—no less than the committal of his grace of Norfolk and his son, the Earl of Surrey, to the Tower."

"More work for me for your majesty," observed Sir John Gage, bluntly. "Yet I would this might be spared me."

"How so, Sir John?" cried the king. "What liking have ye for these traitors?"

"I have yet to learn that they are traitors, my liege," replied Gage, boldly. "As the Duke of

Norfolk is first among your peers, so he has ever been foremost in zeal and devotion to your majesty. Methinks his long services ought to weigh somewhat with you."

"His grace's services have been well requited, Sir John," interposed Seymour. "Know you not the grave charges against him?"

"I know well that you and your brother, the Earl of Hertford, are his enemies, and would rejoice in his downfall," answered the Constable of the Tower.

"Peace, both of ye!" cried the king. "The charge against the Duke of Norfolk, which hath been proven to our satisfaction, is, that contrary to his oath and allegiance to us, he hath many times — mark that, Sir John—many times betrayed the secrets of our privy councils—the privy council, Sir John—to our great peril, and to the infinite detriment of our affairs."

"His grace may have spoken unguardedly—so might any of us——"

"Not you, Sir John," interrupted the king,

dryly. "You never speak unguardedly, I'll answer for it."

"I never speak untruthfully, my liege," rejoined Gage. "And I dare affirm that although the Duke of Norfolk may have babbled of matters about which he had better have held his tongue, he has never been wanting in fidelity and loyalty to your highness."

"You know only part of the duke's heinous offences, or you would not say so much in his defence, Sir John," said Seymour. "Learn, then, that to the peril, slander, and disherison of his majesty and his noble son, Prince Edward, heir apparent to the throne, his aspiring grace of Norfolk hath unjustly, and without authority, borne in the first quarter of his arms the arms of England, which are the proper arms of Prince Edward."

"Is this some new discovery you have made, Sir Thomas?" inquired Gage. "Methinks you must have seen the duke's blazon ever since you bore arms yourself."

"The matter is not new, we grant," said the king, sternly; "but we view it now with different eyes. We discern peril in this audacious act. We see in it pretended claims to be brought forth hereafter—disturbance to the realm—interruption to our son's inheritance to the crown. We see this plainly, and will crush it."

"With all submission, I do not think that the duke hath had any such daring presumption," observed the Constable of the Tower. "But touching the Earl of Surrey: in what hath that peerless nobleman offended?"

"Peerless you well may call him," cried Henry; "for in his own conceit he hath never a peer. Why could not his ambition content itself with shining in Phœbus' court? Why should it soar so high in ours? His treason is the same as his father's. He hath quartered in his shield the arms of Edward the Confessor, denoting pretensions to the crown."

"What more?" demanded the Constable of the Tower.

"What more!" repeated Henry. "Is not that enough? But since you lack further information, Sir Thomas Seymour shall give it you. Tell him what thou knowest, Sir Thomas."

"It were too long to tell all, my liege," replied Seymour. "In regard to his arms, instead of a duke's coronet, Surrey has put a cap of maintenance purple, with powdered fur, and a close crown, and underneath the arms the king's cipher."

"You hear?" cried Henry, sternly.

"Let me propound these questions to Sir John Gage," pursued Seymour. "If a man shall compass to rule the realm, and go about to rule the king, what imports it? Again, if the same man shall declare that if the king dies, none shall have the rule of the prince save his father and himself—what imports it? Again, if that man shall say, 'If the king were dead I would shortly shut up the prince'—what imports it?"

"Treason—arrant treason," replied Gage.

"Then, all this and more of the same trea-

sonous stuff hath Surrey uttered," rejoined Seymour. "He hath sought to bring about a union 'twixt myself and his sister, the Duchess of Richmond, in order that he might have more influence with the king's highness."

"Is this indeed true, Sir Thomas?" inquired Catherine, quickly.

"Ay, madam," he replied. "But failing in his scheme, the earl thenceforth became my mortal enemy, reviling me and my brother Hertford, and vowing that, if Heaven should call away the king, he would avenge himself upon us and all the upstart nobility, as he insolently styles us. He hates us—bitterly hates us for our love to the king, and for the favour shown us by his highness. He says his majesty has had ill counsels."

"How say you now, Sir John?" cried Henry. "Are you not satisfied that the Duke of Norfolk and his son are a couple of traitors?"

"Humph! not altogether," rejoined the Constable.

"You are hard to be convinced, Sir John," said Seymour. "But think not, though I have spoken of myself and my brother Hertford, that I have any personal enmity to Surrey, much less any fear of him. But he is a traitor and dissembler. One of his servants hath been in Italy with Cardinal Pole, and hath been received again on his return. Moreover, he hath Italian spies in his employ, and is in secret correspondence with Rome."

"Are ye still incredulous?" demanded Henry.

"I know not what to say," replied the Constable, in a troubled tone. "But I fear me much that both are condemned."

"Come with us to the council, and you shall hear more," said Henry. "You seem to doubt our justice, but you shall find that we never punish without good cause, nor ever allow the greatness of the offender to shield him from just punishment. Fare ye well, sweetheart, for a while. Get well quickly, an you love us! Give me your arm, Butts; and yours, Sir John."

Upon this, he was raised with some difficulty from his seat, and, supported between the two persons he had named, he moved slowly out of the room.

When his back was turned, Seymour drew somewhat nearer to the queen.

"You have saved my life, Sir Thomas," said Catherine, in a low tone, and with a look of deep gratitude. "How can I pay the debt I owe you."

"There is small merit in the service, madam," he replied, in a low impassioned voice. "I have saved you because your life is dearer to me than my own. I may claim a reward—but not now!"

And with a profound obeisance he retired, casting a parting look at the queen as he passed through the door.

V.

OF THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE EARL OF SURREY AND SIR
THOMAS SEYMOUR IN THE BOWYER TOWER.

A BITTER rivalry had long existed between the newly ennobled house of Seymour and the ancient and illustrious house of Howard. Not less distinguished for exalted rank than renowned as a military commander, the high-born Duke of Norfolk looked down with scorn upon the new nobility, holding them unworthy to be ranked with him; and his sentiments were shared by his chivalrous and accomplished son, Earl Surrey, "of the deathless lay," who, proud as his father, was of a yet more fiery temper. But the duke

soon found that the elder Seymour was not an enemy to be despised. The Earl of Hertford's influence with the king increased, while that of Norfolk declined. When Catherine Howard perished on the block, the duke her uncle, who had brought about the ill-starred match, fell into disfavour with the vindictive monarch, and never regained the place he had hitherto held in Henry's regard.

There was another ground of quarrel between the rival houses. The Howards continued firm in their adherence to the Church of Rome; and the Duke of Norfolk, who was looked upon as the head of the Catholic, and who hated the reformers, made himself obnoxious by his rigour towards the sacramentarians. Hertford, on the other hand, as much as he dared, upheld the new doctrines and supported the Protestant party. On religious questions, the king gave predominance to neither side; but, setting one against the other, was equally severe with both.

This state of things endured for a time without any decisive blow being struck by his enemy against the powerful duke. But when Henry's increasing infirmities made it evident that his dissolution could not be far off, the immediate and total overthrow of the house of Howard was resolved upon by Hertford. As elder uncle of the young Prince Edward, then only in his tenth year, Hertford had secretly determined to become Lord Protector, and thereby enjoy the supreme power of the realm. He could rely upon the chief part of the council for support, but he well knew he should encounter formidable opposition from the Duke of Norfolk. Moreover, both the duke and his son had rashly menaced Hertford and his associates, declaring that the time for vengeance was at hand, and that they should shortly smart for their audacity.

Henry, whose affections had been artfully estranged from the Howards, lent a ready ear to the charges brought against Norfolk and Surrey

by the agency of Hertford, and without weighing the duke's long-tried zeal and fidelity, and the many important services he had rendered him, signed the articles of accusation brought against father and son, causing them both to be suddenly arrested, and lodged in separate prisons in the Tower.

Arraigned in Guildhall before Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, the lord mayor, and other commissioners, the Earl of Surrey vehemently and eloquently defended himself, denying the charges brought against him, and offering to fight his principal accuser, Sir Richard Southwell, in his shirt. But his defence availed him nothing. As had been foreseen, he was found guilty of high treason, condemned to death, and taken back to the Tower to await his execution.

But though the gallant Surrey was thus sentenced, more difficulty was experienced in bringing condemnatory matter against his father. Immured within a cell in the Beauchamp Tower,

treated with great rigour, subjected to frequent private examinations, kept in entire ignorance of the names of his accusers, and even of the accusations brought against him, denied all access to his son, or communication with him, the duke at last succumbed, and a confession of guilt, under promise of pardon, was extorted from him. But this promise, solemnly given by Hertford, was not intended to be kept. On the contrary, the confession was to be made the means of Norfolk's destruction. Moved, perhaps, by some feelings of compassion for his old favourite, and still more by the duke's humble submission, Henry hesitated to sign his death-warrant. But with the rapacity which characterised him to the last, he had not neglected to seize upon the duke's houses, and confiscate his treasures. Norfolk, however, contrived to balk his enemies of the spoil they anticipated. Well aware that Hertford and his associates counted upon dividing his large possessions among them, he petitioned the king that the

estates might be settled upon Prince Edward; and the request appeared so reasonable to Henry, that it was immediately granted. But the duke's life was still in jeopardy, dependent upon the will of a fickle tyrant, who might at any moment surrender him to the enemies who panted for his blood.

Leaving him, however, in this state of dreadful incertitude, we must go back to the Earl of Surrey, whose fate had been sealed, and visit him in his cell within the Bowyer Tower on the night previous to his execution.

In a narrow octangular stone chamber, arched and groined, and having walls of immense thickness, pierced with deep embrasures, which were strongly grated on the outside, sat the unfortunate young nobleman. An iron cresset lamp dimly illumined the cell. A book lay upon the rude oak table, beside which the earl was seated; but though his eyes seemed to dwell upon the leaves, his thoughts were far away. Petrarch for the

first time failed to fix his attention. The young earl was prepared to meet his fate. But with such brilliant prospects before him, with such keen relish of life and all its enjoyments as he possessed, with so much unaccomplished, with so much to bind him to the world, it was hard to perish in the flower of his age.

Surrey was then but seven-and-twenty, and though he might, if spared, have reached a higher point than he ever attained, he was distinguished above all his compeers for gallantry, courtliness, prowess, learning, and wit. After greatly distinguishing himself in the wars with France in 1544, he was made lieutenant-general in the expedition against Boulogne. A preux chevalier of the school of Bayard, he was no unworthy disciple of Petrarch. His graces of person were equal to his graces of mind, and a statelier figure and a nobler or more intellectual countenance than Surrey's could nowhere be found.

On his arraignment at Guildhall he had appeared in a doublet of black tylsent welted with cloth of silver, black silk hose, and a black velvet cassock, lined with crimson silk and furred with sable; and he wore the same garments now—with the exception of the cassock, which he had flung upon a stool—and meant to die in them.

Closing Petrarch, Surrey took up a copy of Virgil, which was lying on the table, and, being provided with writing materials, he set resolutely to work to translate a passage from the *Æneid*. He was occupied in this task when the withdrawing of a bolt on the outside of the door roused him, the key grated in the lock, and the next moment a gaoler, carrying a light, entered the cell.

"Bring you the ghostly father I have asked for to hear my shrift, Master Tombs?" the earl demanded.

"The priest is not yet arrived, my lord," Tombs replied. "The Constable of the Tower is without, and another with him."

"What other?" cried Surrey, springing to his feet. "Is it the duke, my father? Speak, man! —quick!"

"No, my lord. I know not who it may be," answered Tombs; "but assuredly it is not his grace of Norfolk, for I left him not an hour ago in the Beauchamp Tower. Perchance it is one of the council."

As the words were uttered, Sir John Gage passed through the doorway, and in so doing had to stoop his lofty head. He was followed by another tall personage, wrapped in a long black mantle, and so muffled up that his features could not be distinguished. Surrey, however, heeded not the latter, but, advancing towards the Constable, and warmly grasping his hand, exclaimed, "This is well and kindly done, Sir John. You have come to bid me farewell."

"Would I were the bearer of the king's grace to you, my lord!" rejoined Gage, in tones of deep

emotion. "But it is not so. I am indeed come to bid you a last adieu."

"Then, as my friend, worthy Sir John—and such you have ever shown yourself, and never more than now—you will be glad to find that I am indifferent to my fate—nay, not altogether indifferent, but resigned. I have philosophy enough to support me in this hour of trial, and am content to die."

"You amaze me!" exclaimed the Constable. "I did not think you possessed such firmness of soul."

"Nor I," added the muffled individual.

"Who is it speaks?" Surrey demanded. "Methinks I know the voice. I feel as if an enemy stood before me."

"Your instinct has not deceived you, my lord," Sir John Gage observed, in a low tone.

The muffled personage signed to Tombs to retire, and as soon as the gaoler was gone and the door closed, he let fall his cloak.

"You here, Sir Thomas Seymour!" the earl exclaimed, in a stern voice. "Is it not enough that your practices and those of your brother, the Earl of Hertford, have accomplished my destruction, but you must needs come to triumph over me? It is well for you that your malice failed not in its object. Had I lived, you and your brother should both have rued the ill counsels ye have given the king."

"Let not your anger be roused against him, my lord," remarked the Constable, "but part, if you can, at peace with all men."

"Fain would I do so, Sir John," cried Surrey. "But let him not trouble me further."

"You mistake my errand altogether, my lord," said Seymour, haughtily. "It is not in my nature to triumph over a fallen foe. All enmity I have ever felt towards you is at an end. But I have something to say which it concerns you to hear. Leave us for a while, I pray you, Sir John."

"Nothing hath interest with me now," said

Surrey; "yet go, my true friend. But let me see you once again."

"Doubt it not," returned the Constable. And he closed the door as he quitted the cell.

"My lord," said Seymour, "I have been your foe, but, as I just now told you, my enmity is past. Nay, if you will let me, I will prove your friend."

"I desire to die in charity with all men," replied Surrey, gravely, "and I freely forgive you the wrongs you have done me. But for friendship between us—never! The word accords ill with the names of Howard and Seymour."

"Yet it might perhaps be better for both if it existed," rejoined Sir Thomas. "Hear me, my lord. Will you not account me a friend if I rescue you from the doom that awaits you to-morrow?"

"I would not accept life at your hands, or at those of any Seymour," returned Surrey, proudly. "Nor would I ask grace from the king himself—far less seek the intercession of one of his

minions. Be assured I will make no submission to him."

"The duke, your father, has not been so unyielding," said Seymour. "He hath humbly sued for mercy from the king, and, as a means of moving his highness's compassion, hath settled his estates upon Prince Edward."

"Whereby he has robbed you and your insatiate brother of your anticipated prey," rejoined the earl. "Therein he did wisely. Would he had not abased himself by unworthy submission!"

"Nay, my lord, his submission was wise, for though a pardon hath not followed it—as no doubt his grace expected—it will gain him time; and time, just now, is safety. The king cannot last long. A week, Doctor Butts declares, may see him out. Ten days is the utmost he can live."

"You forget the statute that prohibits the foretelling of the king's death, on penalty of death," replied Surrey. "But no matter. I am not likely to betray you. His majesty will out-

last me, at any rate," he added, with a bitter smile.

"If you will be ruled by me, my lord, you shall survive him many a year. I cannot offer you a pardon, but I can do that which will serve you as well. I can stay your execution. I can put it off from day to day, till what we look for shall happen—and so you shall escape the block."

"But wherefore do you seek to save me?" demanded Surrey. "Till this moment I have deemed that my destruction was your aim. Why, at the last moment, do you thus hinder the fulfilment of your own work?"

"Listen to me, my lord, and you shall learn. Dissimulation would be idle now, and I shall not attempt it. My brother Hertford compassed your father's destruction and your own, because he saw in you opponents dangerous to his schemes of future greatness. He will be guardian to Prince Edward, and would be Lord Protector of the realm—king in all but name."

"I know how highly his ambition soars," exclaimed Surrey. "Heaven shield Prince Edward, and guard him from his guardians! In losing me and my father he will lose those who might best have counselled him and served him. But proceed, Sir Thomas. You have spoken plainly enough of Lord Hertford's designs. What are your own? What post do you count on filling?"

"I have as much ambition as my brother," replied Seymour; "and like him am uncle to the king that shall be soon. You will easily perceive my drift, my lord, when I tell you that my brother hates me, fears me, and would keep me down. He is to be everything—I nothing."

"Ha! is it so?" cried Surrey.

"I say he fears me—and with reason," pursued Seymour. "Let him take heed that I rob him not of the dignity he covets. I am Prince Edward's favourite uncle—he loves me better than Hertford, and will be right glad of the exchange of governors."

"Again I pray Heaven to guard the young prince from his guardians!" murmured Surrey.

"Hertford hath the majority of the council with him : Cranmer, St. John, Russell, Lisle, Tunstal, Sir Anthony Brown, Sir Anthony Denny—all save Wriothesley and my brother, Sir William Herbert. They are with me. Could I but reckon on his grace of Norfolk and on you, I should consider the success of my plan as certain."

"You have made no overtures of this nature to my father, sir?" cried Surrey, eagerly.

"Not as yet," Seymour replied. "But I cannot doubt his grace's concurrence."

"You do not know my father, or you would not dare assert so much," rejoined Surrey. "He would reject your proposal as scornfully as I reject it. He would not buy his life on terms so infamous."

"I see no degradation in the terms," said Seymour. "I offer you life, all the honours you have forfeited, and all the estates you have lost, and

ask only in return your staunch support ; little enough, methinks ! Have you no love left for life, Lord Surrey ? Have your pulses ceased to beat with their former ardour ? Are your ears deaf to the trumpet-blast of fame ? Have your own chivalrous deeds faded from your memory ? Have you forgotten the day when, at the jousts given by the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, at Florence, you sustained the beauty of the lady of your love, the fair Geraldine, against all comers, and remained victorious ? Have you had your fill of knightly worship and military renown ? You are a widower, and may, without presumption, aspire to the hand of the Princess Mary. Ha !—have I touched you, my lord ? But I will go on. Have courtly revels lost attraction for him who was once their chief ornament ? Have the Muses ceased to charm you ? I should judge not, when I see how you have been recently employed.”

“Oh ! no, no !” exclaimed Surrey. “Life has

lost none of its attractions in my sight. Glory and fame are dear as ever to me."

"Then live! live! and win yet more fame and glory," cried Seymour, with something of triumph, thinking he had vanquished the earl's scruples.

"Well as I love life," said Surrey, "I love my reputation better, and will not tarnish it by any unworthy act. I reject your offer, Sir Thomas."

"Your blood be upon your own head, then," rejoined Seymour, sternly. "Your samples are fantastical and absurd. But we could look only for frenzy in a poet," he added, with scorn.

"You taunt an unarmed man, Sir Thomas," cried Surrey, with flashing eyes, "and 'tis a craven act. Had I been free, you dared not for your life have said so much! You have come at this final hour, like an evil spirit, to tempt me to wrong and dishonour—but you have failed. Now mark my words, for I feel they are prophetic. You and your brother have brought me to the scaffold

— but my blood shall fly to heaven for vengeance. Your ambitious schemes shall come to nought. You shall have power only to lose it. The seeds of dissension and strife are already sown between you, and shall quickly grow and ripen. You shall plot against one another, and destroy one another. His hand shall sign your death-warrant, but your dying curse shall alight upon his head, and the fratricide shall perish on the same scaffold as yourself. Think on my words, Sir Thomas, when, like me, you are a prisoner in the Tower.”

“Tush! I have no fear,” replied Seymour, scarcely able to repress his uneasiness. “’Tis a pity you will not live to witness my nephew’s coronation. You might have written an ode thereon.”

“I will write your epitaph instead, sir,” rejoined Surrey, “and leave it with the headsman.”

At this moment the door of the cell was opened, and Sir John Gage stepped in.

"The ghostly father is without, my lord," he said, addressing Surrey. "But you look ruffled. Nothing, I trust, has occurred to chafe you?"

"Ask Sir Thomas Seymour," the earl rejoined. "He will tell you as much, or as little as he thinks fit. For myself, I have done with all worldly matters, and have time only to think of my sins, and ask forgiveness for them."

After a brief pause, he added in a voice of deep emotion, "One commission I will charge you with, good Sir John, and I well know you will not neglect it. Since my imprisonment in the Tower I have not seen my little boy, and I shall never see him more. Kiss him for me, and give him my last blessing. Tell him I died without reproach and with unspotted honour. Poor orphan child! Early bereft of a mother's tenderness, thou wilt be robbed of a father's love by a yet more cruel stroke of fate! But something tells me thou shalt regain the title and dignity I have lost. Fare you well for ever, good Sir

John!" he continued, embracing him. "I have nothing but those poor books to give you. If you care to have them, I pray you keep them in remembrance of your friend, Henry Howard."

"I shall dearly prize the gift, my lord," replied Sir John, much moved, and fearful of unmanning himself—"farewell!"

Meanwhile, Seymour had resumed his cloak. Not a word more passed between him and Surrey, but they eyed each other sternly as Sir Thomas quitted the cell.

Soon afterwards, the priest was ushered in by Tombs, and remained for more than an hour with the earl.

On the next day, the chivalrous Surrey was decapitated on Tower-hill. His constancy remained unshaken to the last. Greeting the executioner with a smile, he laid his graceful head upon the block amid the tears and lamentations of the beholders.

VI.

HOW THE KING, FINDING HIS END APPROACH, TOOK A LAST
LEAVE OF THE PRINCESSES MARY AND ELIZABETH, AND
OF THE PRINCE EDWARD; AND OF THE COUNSEL HE GAVE
THEM.

SURREY was gone, but his destroyer yet lingered on earth. By this time, however, the king's malady had made such progress, that Doctor Butts confidentially informed the Earl of Hertford and some others of the council, that his majesty had little more than a week to live; but that possibly his existence might be terminated at an earlier period. Henry could not be unconscious of his danger, though he spoke not of it, and no

one—not even his physician, or his confessor, the Bishop of Rochester—dared to warn him of his approaching dissolution. He heard mass daily in his chamber, and received other rites, which led to the supposition that he was about to be reconciled, at the last moment, to the see of Rome. This opinion was strengthened when Gardiner and Wriothesley were again sent for, and restored to favour. Thus things continued, until Sir John Gage, seeing that all shrank from the perilous task of acquainting the dying monarch with his true condition, boldly inquired if he had no desire to see Prince Edward and the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth.

“To take leave of them! Is that what you mean?—ha!” roared Henry, who had just recovered from a paroxysm of anguish. “Speak out, man?”

“It is,” replied the Constable, firmly. “Forgive me, sire, if I offend. I but discharge my duty.”

There was a terrible silence, during which no one could say what might ensue. No explosion of rage, however, followed. On the contrary, the king said, in a milder tone, "Thou art a faithful servant, Sir John, and I honour thy courage. The interview must not be delayed. Let my children be brought to me to-morrow."

"I rejoice to hear your majesty say so," replied Gage. "I will myself set out at once for Hampton Court, and bring his Highness Prince Edward and the Princess Elizabeth to the palace."

"I will go with you, Sir John," said Sir Thomas Seymour.

"And with your majesty's permission, I will repair to Greenwich, and advise the Princess Mary of your commands," said Sir George Blagge. "I am assured she will hasten to obey them."

"I am much beholden to you, sirs," replied the king. "If Heaven shall grant me so much life, I look to see all three to-morrow. Let the whole of the council attend at the same time."

Give me a draught of wine—and quickly, knave,” he added, to a cup-bearer near him. “I feel exceeding faint.”

“Saints grant that to-morrow be not too late!—his looks alarm me,” observed the Constable of the Tower, as he withdrew with Seymour and Blagge.

Contrary to expectation, Henry was somewhat better next day. He had slept a little during the night, having obtained some slight respite from the excruciating tortures he endured. Resolved to maintain his regal state and dignity to the last, he gave orders that as much ceremony should be observed at this his parting interview with his children as if it had been a grand reception. Causing the great cumbrous chair, which he now rarely quitted, to be placed beneath a cloth of estate embroidered with the arms of England, he sat in it propped up with velvet pillows, and wrapped in a long gown of white tylsent, flowered with gold, and lined and bordered with fur, and having wide sleeves. His head was covered with

the embroidered black silk skull-cap, which he now customarily wore.

On the opposite side of the chamber, in a chair of state, but not under a canopy, sat Queen Catherine, surrounded by Viscountess Lisle, Lady Tyrwhitt, and other ladies.

On the left of the king stood the Earl of Hertford, bearing his wand of office as great chamberlain. The pearled collar of the Garter with the George attached to it encircled his neck, and the gold band of the order was worn below his knee. He was magnificently apparelled in a doublet of white satin, embroidered all over with pearls of damask gold, with sleeves of the same stuff, formed down with threads of Venice silver. Over this he wore a cassock of blue velvet, embroidered with gold, and furred. Though not so strikingly handsome as his younger brother, Sir Thomas Seymour, the Earl of Hertford was yet a very noble-looking personage, with a fine cast of countenance, a tall, stately figure, and a com-

manding deportment. His eyes were dark and penetrating, but a slight contraction of the brows gave a somewhat sinister effect to his glances. His forehead was high and bald, his features regular and well shaped, the distinguishing expression of the face being gravity, tinged by melancholy. He had none of the boldness of look and manner that characterised his brother; but more caution, and perhaps subtlety. His complexion was pale, and his beard somewhat thin. Hertford's career had been one of uninterrupted success. By the king's favour, he had risen to greatness. On Henry's marriage with his sister, Jane Seymour, he was created Viscount Beauchamp. Sent ambassador to Paris in 1540, in the following year he received the Order of the Garter. In 1542 he was appointed Lord Great Chamberlain of England for life. Two years later, in the war with Scotland, he accompanied the Duke of Norfolk to that kingdom with the title of Lieutenant-General of the North; and when Henry

proceeded to the siege of Boulogne, he was named one of the four councillors entrusted with the care of the realm. Only a few months ago he had been made Earl of Hertford. But high as he had risen, the aspiring noble looked to rise much higher. His dreams of ambition seemed about to be fulfilled. Supreme power was almost within his grasp. His enemies were removed or crushed. Surrey had lost his head—a like doom awaited Norfolk. Soon—very soon must come the day when Henry would be called to his account: Then the boy Edward would mount the throne—but he, his uncle, his guardian, would rule in his name. What more the earl dreamed of may appear when we have occasion to sound the inmost recesses of his breast.

Another important actor in this scene, and who secretly nourished ambitious designs scarcely less daring than those of Hertford, was John Dudley, Viscount Lisle. Son of that Edmond Dudley, whose death upon the scaffold inaugurated Henry's

accession to the throne, this scheming and far-seeing noble had early distinguished himself by his bravery in the wars with France, and obtained the honour of knighthood besides regaining his forfeit rights. Attached both to Wolsey and Cromwell, he rose by their aid, and being appointed governor of Boulogne, which he successfully defended against all assaults, he was elevated to the dignity of Viscount Lisle, and made High-Admiral of England. He was, moreover, enriched by the lavish sovereign, whose favour he had won, by large possessions wrested from the Church, which were afterwards thought to bring down a curse upon him. Bold and ambitious, Lord Lisle was a profound dissembler, and though even at this moment he meditated plans which were not developed until long afterwards, he allowed no hint of his designs to escape him, but was content for the time to play a subordinate part to Hertford, whom he hoped in the end to eclipse. As a means towards that object he looked to Sir

Thomas Seymour. Lord Lisle was now in his forty-fifth year. His large and strongly-marked features evinced sagacity, shrewdness, and determination. His beard was scanty, and his short moustache disclosed a singularly firm-set mouth. His figure was tall, and his deportment martial, but his manner had nothing of the roughness of the camp about it. He could play equally well the part of soldier or of courtier. Compared with Hertford he was soberly attired, his habiliments being of dark velvet, destitute of embroidery, though his cassock was richly furred. But he wore the George and collar, and the lesser ensign of the Garter.

Near to Lord Lisle stood a venerable nobleman, with a long silvery beard descending almost to his girdle. This was Lord Russell, privy seal. The old peer bore his years well; having a hale look, and a stout frame. Like Hertford and Lisle he was a knight companion of the Garter, and decorated with the insignia of the order.

Besides those already mentioned, there were several others grouped around the king, whom it will not be needful individually to describe. Amongst them was the Lord St. John, great master; Sir Anthony Brown, master of the horse; Sir William Paget, chief secretary; Sir Anthony Wingfield, vice-chamberlain; Sir Thomas Cheney, treasurer; Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert, chief gentlemen of the privy chamber; Sir Richard Rich, Sir John Baker, Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Richard Southwell, and others—all shining in rich habiliments, and making a goodly show.

The Lord Chancellor Wriothesley and Gardiner were likewise there, but held themselves apart from Hertford. But Gardiner was not the only ecclesiastic present. Others there were besides—namely, Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, and the king's confessor, the Bishop of Rochester. But there was yet another greater than them all—Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Clothed in his full ecclesiastical vestments of stole, chimere, and rochette, the primate stood on the right of the king. His manner was grave and dignified; his looks stern and full of thought, and a long grey beard added to the reverend expression of his countenance. Cranmer's features were hard, but yet not wholly destitute of kindness. He seemed profoundly impressed—almost weighed down by the gravity of the occasion.

Indeed, notwithstanding the splendour that marked it, the assemblage had a mournful and solemn character. Not a word was spoken save in a whisper; each countenance wore a sad and sombre expression. All felt, though none cared to acknowledge it, that, in all likelihood, it was the last occasion on which they should be thus brought together during the king's life. Few among them would have retarded Henry's departure to his last home, had it been in their power to do so; some, indeed, would willingly have accelerated the event; and yet to judge by their

faces all were full of sorrow, as if about to sustain a deep and irreparable loss.

For a few minutes it seemed as if the king himself were overpowered by this general semblance of grief. At length he roused himself, glanced with moistened eyes around the assemblage, and pressed Cranmer's hand kindly. He next called for a cup of wine, and, fortified by the draught, seemed to shake off his weakness. "Let the princesses come in," he said to Hertford; "I am ready to receive them."

Making a profound obeisance, the earl moved towards the bottom of the chamber, and the arras screening a door in this quarter being drawn aside at his approach by the gentlemen ushers in attendance, he disappeared, but returned the next moment leading the Princess Mary by the hand, while the Princess Elizabeth was conducted into the chamber in like manner by Sir Thomas Seymour. The two princesses were followed at a

respectful distance by the Countess of Hertford and Lady Herbert.

Mary looked very grave, and seemed to have some difficulty in controlling her emotion, as her quivering lip betokened. Elizabeth had evidently been weeping, for tears were still in her eyes. Both were richly attired; but the elder sister had more of ornament about her dress—perhaps, because she needed it most—than the other. Mary's head-gear, of the angular form then in vogue, was of rich goldsmith's work, bordered with jewels, and was completed by a long couvrechief of satin worked with gold. Her stomacher was fastened by two brooches of agates set with emeralds, from the lower of which a large orient pearl depended. Her slender waist was encircled by a girdle of goldsmith's work, with roses of rubies, having friars' knots, and hanging down in front. Her dress was of gold bawdkin, and fitting tight to the body, betrayed her extreme thinness, and gave her a very rigid look. Her dark auburn

locks (for we care not to call them red) were gathered becomingly enough beneath her head-gear. Mary had few charms of person. She was thin to meagreness, and her features possessed little beauty ; but they were intelligent in expression. To compensate, however, for these defects, she had great dignity of manner, and much grace; and there were some—and not a few—who, dazzled by her high rank, held her very blemishes to be beauties.

Mary was more than double the age of her sister, being thirty-two, while Elizabeth was only just thirteen. The younger princess, however, was a very well-grown girl, quite as tall as her sister, and infinitely more attractive in personal appearance. Elizabeth's charms, indeed, were almost precocious. Few who beheld her would have deemed her so young as she was in reality, but would have given her a year or two in advance. She had a finely formed figure, already well developed, a complexion of dazzling whiteness, bright

golden locks of great abundance, charming features, eyes blue and tender, and teeth like pearls. Her hands were of remarkable beauty, with taper fingers and rosy nails. Her profuse locks were confined by a band of gold and a net of gold wire, scarcely distinguishable from the bright tresses it restrained; a long white satin couvreichief fell behind her neck, and a dress of black taffeta displayed her figure to advantage, and at the same time set off the lovely whiteness of her skin.

As Mary approached the king, Cranmer slowly advanced to meet her, thus addressing her, in a voice of much solemnity: "Right high, right noble, and right excellent princess, the king, your august father, feeling that it may please Almighty God to call him hence suddenly, hath sent for you, and the right noble princess your sister, to give you wholesome counsel, to bestow his blessing on you, and to take, it may be"—(here the archbishop's voice slightly faltered)—"though Heaven

grant it may be otherwise!—a last leave of you both. Nothing doubting that you will keep his counsels ever in your heart, and that you will have the glorious example set by his majesty constantly before you, I pray your highnesses to kneel down before your royal father, and in that reverent posture give heed to what he shall say to you.”

“I need no schooling in my duty from you, my lord of Canterbury,” replied Mary, who hated Cranmer. “Not a word shall fall from my royal father’s lips but it will dwell for ever in my breast.”

Elizabeth attempted to speak, but words failed her, and she burst into tears.

Meanwhile, cushions of crimson velvet were placed near the chair occupied by the ailing monarch, and on these both princesses knelt down. Aided by Sir John Gage and Lord Lisle, Henry slightly raised himself, and this office performed, the assistants immediately retired.

Extending his arms over his daughters, the king said somewhat feebly, but with great earnestness, "My blessing on ye both! and may it rest ever with ye.—ever! Only to the great Ruler of events is known the destiny in store for you. Both of ye may be queens—and should it so chance, ye will learn what cares the crown brings with it. But think only—as I have ever done—of the welfare and glory of your kingdom, and of your own honour, and ye shall reign wisely and well."

"Should it ever be my lot to reign, sire, I will essay to follow your glorious example," said Mary.

"I shall never be queen," sobbed Elizabeth, "and therefore I need make no promise."

"How know you that, girl?" cried the king, angrily. "You are as likely to be queen as Mary. I want no promises. I have pointed out the way you ought to pursue, and if you be not a degenerate daughter you will follow it."

"I despair of emulating your greatness, O my

father!" cried Elizabeth. "But if it shall please Providence to call upon me to rule, I will endeavour to rule well."

"Enough!" replied Henry, appeased. "And now arise, both of ye, that I may look at you more nearly, for my sight waxes somewhat dim."

Taking his elder daughter's hand as she arose, Henry looked at her fixedly for a few minutes, during which he murmured, "Forgive me, Katherine, my first spouse, if I have ever dealt harshly with this thy daughter!" adding aloud, after a pause, "It is right you should both know it—and that all should know it—that by my will I have confirmed the succession of both of ye to the crown. Neither of ye may wed, save with the consent and approval of the council—such consent to be given under hand and seal. But on your marriage each of ye shall have such sums of money as I have appointed, together with such jewels, plate, and household stuffs, as shall seem meet to those entrusted with the performance of

my testament. I have left ye both alike—alike in yearly income, while ye continue single—alike on marriage. Now, mark me, Mary,” he continued, sternly and authoritatively, “if you perform not the conditions required of you by my will, the crown will devolve on Elizabeth. And if Elizabeth shall neglect them,” he added, glancing at his younger child, “the crown will go to our well-beloved niece, Frances Brandon, daughter of our sister Mary and the Duke of Suffolk. Now both of you know our will and pleasure. Kiss me, Mary, and let thy sister come nigh me.”

Taking Elizabeth's hand, who stood weeping before him and earnestly perusing her features, the king seemed struggling with recollections that would force themselves upon him, for he muttered to himself, “Ay, 'tis the very face, the eye, the lip!—thus looked she when I chided her. In all things she is like her mother, save in the colour of her hair. Anne, sweet Anne, how well do I recal thee with all thy winning ways! This

fair child's neck is like to thine ; and yet——
Would I could bring thee back again !”

As these words reached her ear, Elizabeth's tears fell yet more freely, and she trembled as a deep groan burst from the king. But Henry quickly shook off these passing feelings of remorse, and said kindly but firmly, “Weep not, sweet child, thou wilt spoil thy pretty eyes else. Keep thy sorrow till thou hast lost me. Be discreet, girl. Thou art fair, and wilt be fairer. Grow in grace as thou growest in beauty. So shalt thou be truly loved and honoured. Beauty without discretion bringeth death — thy mother found it so. Kiss me, and lay my counsel well to heart.”

Elizabeth, almost shudderingly, complied, and the king, feeling exhausted by the effort he had made, called for another cup of wine, and, after draining the goblet deeply, asked for Prince Edward.

Meanwhile, the princesses had retired, and sta-

tioned themselves on the other side of the chamber, near the queen.

On learning his majesty's pleasure, the Earl of Hertford proceeded to the door from which the princesses had issued, and presently ushered in the youthful prince, conducting him ceremoniously towards the king. The prince was followed by Sir George Blagge and two other gentlemen.

All eyes were fixed upon Edward on his entrance, and every head was inclined as if in homage to the future sovereign. He gracefully acknowledged the reverence shown him, which no doubt would have been even greater but from the fear of offending the jealous king. The young prince, it has already been mentioned, had but just entered upon his tenth year, but he seemed to possess a degree of intelligence far beyond his age, and had, indeed, been most carefully instructed by some of the most learned men of the day. He spoke French and Italian, and had written letters in Latin to his father, his sisters, *

and the queen. There was a great fragility of look about him, and he seemed to have shot up quickly, like a forced plant. Though tall for his age, his limbs were very slight, and his complexion was of feminine delicacy. In appearance he was more of a Seymour than a Tudor. His face was a perfect oval, with some traces of his stern father about it, but his lineaments generally resembled those of his beautiful mother. His expression was gentle, but thoughtful—more thoughtful than befitted a child. His eyes were of a dark brown, and soft; his hair was light in hue, with a tinge of gold in it, worn short, and cut close round the forehead. He was attired like the son of a splendid monarch, and the heir to a powerful throne. His little cassock was of murrey-coloured velvet, embroidered all over with damask, gold and pearls, and having buttons and loops of gold; his doublet and hose were of dark-red satin, woven with threads of gold, and his velvet buskins were decorated with gold aglets. He was

armed with a short rapier and a poniard in a richly ornamented sheath, and a velvet pouch was suspended from his girdle. His flat velvet cap, which was removed on entering his royal father's presence, was adorned with rubies and emeralds, and had a brooch set with fair table diamonds on the right side, over which drooped a blood-red feather.

Again Cranmer advanced, and addressed the prince in terms nearly similar to those he had employed towards his sisters, but there was, perhaps, more of deference in his manner. Edward gazed at him with his clear eyes, steadily at first, but, as the archbishop proceeded, the young prince's composure quite forsook him. Natural feelings asserted their sway over his childish breast, and disregarding etiquette, he rushed towards the king, and, flinging his little arms round his neck, sobbed out, "My father!—my dear father!"

So unexpected, though so natural, was this occurrence, that, cold and callous as were most of

the assemblage, few of them refused it the tribute of sympathy. Some were even moved to tears. Fearing the effect of any sudden shock upon the king, Doctor Butts stepped towards him. But, though Henry was sensibly touched by this display of his son's affection, his nerves were strong enough to bear it. Kissing the boy on the brow, he gently disengaged himself from his embrace, addressing a few soothing words to him in a very kindly tone, while Edward still continued to weep.

Thinking the king might be troubled if the scene endured too long, the Earl of Hertford moved towards his nephew, but Henry checked him, by calling out, "Let him be!—let him be!"

But the action called Edward to himself. Controlling his grief, he knelt on the cushion before the king, and regarding him with eyes that were still filled with tears, he said, "Forgive me, sire! It is thus I ought to ask your blessing."

"Thou hast it, my dear child," replied the king, solemnly, yet tenderly. "Heaven bless thee,

boy—my kingdom's hope and my own. May those I have appointed to watch over thee fulfil their trust."

"Doubt it not, my liege," said Hertford, as the king paused for a moment.

"Mark me, Edward!" pursued Henry, summoning up all his firmness. "Eight years must elapse ere thou canst exercise the full authority of the crown. I have so willed it. Thou wilt be king soon enough. Meantime, prepare thyself for the high and important duties thou wilt have to discharge. I doubt not thou wilt have the notable virtues and princely qualities which should distinguish a sovereign. I know thee to be godly-minded, and I thank Heaven it is so; praying that thy heart may be illumined to all holy truths. I have provided thee with religious counsellors, to whom my desires are known, and in the soundness of whose judgment and principles I can rely. Can I not confide the prince's religious culture to you, my lord of Canterbury?" (to Cranmer);

"and to you, my lord of Durham?" (to Tunstall).

"And to me likewise, I would fain hope, my gracious liege?" observed Gardiner.

"No, not to thee, my lord of Winchester," rejoined Henry. "Thou art a tool of the Pope. Listen to me, Edward. Thou wilt be placed under the guidance of the virtuous Cranmer. Give heed to his precepts. But on points of faith, when thou comest to understand them, be biased by no perverse doctrines. There is, unhappily, much discord and variance in the Church. The clergy preach one against another, teach one contrary to the other, inveigh one against another, without charity or discretion, and few or none of them preach truly and sincerely the word of God according as they ought to do. Unto thee it will be committed to correct these offences, and extinguish these dissensions. Thou wilt enjoy the same supreme spiritual authority as myself. Thou wilt be Heaven's vicar and high minister. Be not

an unprofitable servant. Tread in thy father's footsteps—so shalt thou not stray from the path."

"I will do all that in me lies to act as you enjoin me, sire," replied Edward, meekly. "And I trust that with the aid of his good grace of Canterbury I may succeed. I thank you heartily for placing me in his grace's hands."

"The boy hath been schooled in this," remarked Wriothealey, in a low contemptuous tone, to Gardiner.

"No doubt on't; and he knows his lesson well," rejoined the bishop. "But we will teach him better ere long."

"Thus much for thy religious culture, my son," pursued Henry. "Though I would have thee pious and learned, I would not have thee hurt thy health by over study. To be firm of mind thou must be firm of body: to uphold the kingly dignity, as thy father hath upheld it, thou must be robust and full of vigour. I would have thee skilled in all manly exercises and accomplish-

ments. Strengthen thy arm betimes, so that it can bear a lance, and thy limbs so that they can sustain harness of war, and brook fatigue."

"Nay, father," cried Edward, brightening up and springing to his feet, "I shall soon be strong enough to bear a lance and ride in the tilt-yard; my uncle Sir Thomas Seymour tells me so. I often fence with him, and he tells me I am an apt scholar. I would your majesty could see us at practice."

"No man is better able to teach thee all thou shouldst learn of martial exercises than thine uncle Seymour," replied the king, patting his son's head approvingly. "Sir Thomas," he added to Seymour, who stepped forward promptly at the summons, "I confide this part of my son's education to thee. While others make him a scholar and a theologian, be it thine to teach him princely manners and accomplishments."

"He shall lack nothing that I am able to teach, rely on it," replied Seymour, bowing profoundly.

"Give thy uncle thine hand, Edward," said the king.

"Ay will I, and that right willingly," replied the prince, grasping the hand which Seymour proffered him. "I love my uncle Sir Thomas best of any—your majesty excepted."

"Ha! is it so?" mentally ejaculated Hertford. "Have I no place in thy regard, my gentle nephew?" he added aloud to the prince.

"Certes, my dear lord; I were an ingrate else," replied Edward. "But my uncle Sir Thomas is oftener with me than you are."

"I thought as much," muttered Hertford. "This must be stopped."

"Thou hast my son's hand within thine own, Sir Thomas?" demanded Henry.

"Ay, my liege," replied Seymour.

"Be it a pledge that thou wilt be ever true to him," pursued the king.

"I hereby vow fidelity to him," said Seymour, bending the knee, and kissing his nephew's hand.

"You are the best lance, the best swordsman, and the best horseman at our court, Sir Thomas," continued the king to Seymour. "See that my son equals you in all these exercises."

"He shall excel me in them all," replied the other.

"A word in your ear, Sir Thomas," said the king. "He is but a tender stripling," he added, in a lower tone. "Press him not beyond his strength. For your sister's sake, be a kind uncle to him."

"For her sake—for yours, my liege—I will be to him all you could desire," rejoined Seymour, earnestly.

As Sir Thomas retired, Henry said to his son, "Go to the queen, Edward, and conduct her to me."

Upon this, the prince immediately tripped towards Catherine, who caught him in her arms, and kissed him tenderly; after which she arose and accompanied him to the king.

On drawing near her royal husband, the queen would have knelt down, but Henry would not permither. Taking her hand kindly, he said, with the same earnestness with which he had spoken throughout, "Thou hast ever been an obedient wife, Kate, and in all things conformable to my will. Thou wilt not, therefore, I am well assured, disobey my last injunctions. This pretty boy has never known a mother's love. Be thou a mother to him. Thou hast no child to wean thy tenderness from him—give it him all."

"He has it all already, sire," replied the queen. "Dost thou not love me, Edward?"

"Ay, madam, as a mother," replied the prince, affectionately.

"That is well," said Henry; "but you must not humour his every whim, Kate. I hear he is somewhat wilful."

"Those who have said so to your majesty, wrong him," rejoined the queen. "Edward is ever good and gentle—yea, most tractable."

"If he continue so, it shall be well," said Henry.
"Thou lov'st thy sisters, Edward? Speak the truth boy!"

"I ever do speak truth, sire," replied the prince.
"I love them dearly. But I love Elizabeth best," he added, in a lower tone, to the king, "for Mary is sometimes sharp and peevish with me, but Elizabeth is ever merry and ready for play."

"Elizabeth is nearer thine own age, boy. Thou wilt find out Mary's merits as thou growest older," replied the king. "I would have ye all dwell together in unity—ha!"

"What ails your majesty?" cried Catherine, alarmed by the sudden alteration of his countenance.

"A spasm—it is gone," rejoined Henry, with a groan.

"Father—dear father! you look ill," cried Edward, terrified.

"Take him away," said the king, faintly, sinking backwards as he spoke.

All was now confusion and alarm, apprehension being generally entertained that the king was dying. Advancing quickly towards his royal patient, Doctor Butts placed his hand upon his pulse, and watched his countenance with great anxiety.

"Is he gone, think you?" asked Gardiner, anxiously, and in a low tone, of Wriothesley.

"It would seem so from Butts's looks," replied the other. "If he be, Norfolk's life is saved, for they will not dare execute him."

"Heaven grant it!" ejaculated Gardiner. "Mark you not Hertford's trouble? Something has been left undone."

"All may have been left undone," rejoined Wriothesley. "I do not think the will is signed."

"That were indeed a gain for us," said Gardiner. "But I dare scarcely hope it."

"How fares it with his highness?" inquired the Earl of Hertford, whose countenance displayed

much anxiety, as the physician moved away his hand.

"The king will live," replied Butts. "Let the chamber be instantly cleared."

"Ye hear, my lords?" said Hertford, evidently much relieved. "Doctor Butts declares that his majesty is in no immediate danger, but he prays ye all to depart at once."

Thus exhorted, the assemblage began instantly to disperse.

Prince Edward, however, still lingered, though the queen, who was moving away, beckoned him to come with her.

"May I not stay with the king, my father?" said the prince, plucking Doctor Butts's robe.

"It grieves me to refuse your highness, but it cannot be," replied the physician.

"Come with me, Edward," said Sir Thomas Seymour. "The queen waits for you. This is a scene unmeet for eyes like yours."

The young prince took his uncle's hand, and

allowed himself to be led out of the room, looking wistfully at his father as he retired. He never beheld him more.

"You are sure he will revive?" inquired the Earl of Hertford of Doctor Butts, as they were left alone with the still inanimate monarch.

"I am certain of it," replied the physician.
"But I will not answer that he may live many hours. You look uneasy, my lord. What remains to be done?"

"Everything," replied Hertford. "Norfolk still lives — and the king hath not signed his will."

"He spoke as if he had," remarked Butts.

"All think so, and I would not have them undeceived," replied Hertford. "The will has been well considered and debated, as you know, and is fully prepared, but he ever puts off the signing of it. All my persuasions have failed with him."

"Obstinate as he is, he *shall* sign it," replied

the physician. "But hush!" he added, with a gesture of silence; "he stirs! Retire, my lord. And send Ferrys, the king's chirurgeon, to me with all despatch."

VII.

OF THE AWFUL SUMMONS RECEIVED BY THE KING.

UNDER the superintendence of Doctor Butts and of the chirurgeon Ferrys, and by the help of an engine employed for the purpose, Henry, who had only partially regained his consciousness, was lifted from his chair, and placed in a couch in the royal sleeping-chamber. The couch wherein he was thus deposited was of unusual size, and made of oak, richly carved, and black and lustrous as ebony. The lofty canopy was crowned with blood-red plumes, and supported by twisted pillars. The curtains were of cloth of gold of the thickest

texture, embroidered with the Holy Cross, the cross of Saint George, the Rose, the Portcullis, and the Lion rampant, mingled with Fleurs-de-lys. The head of the bed was sculptured in bold relief with the arms of England. Notwithstanding the magnificence of its curtains, the general appearance of this huge bed was sombre in the extreme, and it looked a fitting receptacle for an expiring monarch. The walls of the chamber were hung with fine tapestry from the woofs of Tournay, representing the principal actions of Solomon the Wise, and in the upper border scrolls were painted in black letter sundry texts of Scripture, applicable to the destination of the room.

A dreadful night ensued, long remembered by those who watched by Henry's troubled couch, or were near enough to hear his appalling groans and roars of agony. No one who then listened to his terrific outcries, or witnessed his desperate struggles for breath, but felt that the despot's numerous victims were amply avenged. For every

life taken by him it seemed he must endure a pang: and yet, though ever dying, he could not die. Throughout the long, long night, in that vast, dimly-lighted chamber, rendered gloomier by the dusky furniture and the grim arras on the walls, might be seen dark figures, as if detached from the tapestry, gliding with ghostly footsteps towards the king's couch, questioning the physician and chirurgeon in dumb show, and then swiftly but silently retreating if a groan broke from the royal sufferer. One tall personage, scarcely to be distinguished from the hangings near which he stood, remained stationary at the back of the room throughout the whole night, as if anxiously awaiting the issue of this fearful conflict with death. Ever and anon, Doctor Butts moved noiselessly towards this sombre and mysterious-looking personage, and spoke with him under his breath. Their muttered converse had evident reference to the king, and to something required of him by the untiring watcher, whose gestures

proclaimed the utmost anxiety; but, however important the matter might be, Butts clearly deemed it impracticable, for he shook his head, and returned alone to the sick monarch's couch. Worn out by anguish, Henry dropped asleep towards morning, and this favourable circumstance being communicated to the watcher, he disappeared, having previously received an assurance from Doctor Butts that he should be instantly sent for if any change for the worse occurred. Some of the drowsy pages and henchmen likewise sought repose; but the medical attendants did not for a moment quit the king's bedside.

Henry slept for several hours, and awoke, towards noon, much refreshed, and expressed a desire to receive the sacrament. After ordering the Bishop of Oxford to be summoned, the king commanded his attendants to lift him out of bed, and set him again in his chair. Doctor Butts endeavoured to dissuade him from this step, repre-

senting its extreme danger, and counselling the easiest posture possible during the performance of the holy office; but Henry authoritatively declared that he would kneel down, whatever risk might be incurred from the action, or whatever pain it might give him; adding, "that if he were not only to cast himself upon the ground, but under it, he could not tender to the sacrament the honour that was its due." No more was to be said. His injunctions were obeyed. Taken up and placed within his chair, he kept his seat until the consecration, when, with much difficulty, he contrived to kneel down before the bishop, and partook of the bread and wine. Though his sufferings must have been intense, he bore them with the constancy of a martyr, and the good prelate, who was much affected, could not sufficiently admire his fortitude. As soon as the sacred rite was over, the king was conveyed back to his couch, and did not appear much worse for the great

effort he had made. By his own injunctions, which could not be disobeyed, he was then left wholly undisturbed until late in the day.

This was the evening of the Friday before Candlemas-day, 1547. About two hours before midnight, but not till then, the Earl of Hertford, who was in an agony of impatience for an audience, was permitted to approach the king. He found him lying on the couch, propped up by immense pillows. On regarding him, Hertford felt sure that the king was rapidly sinking, though his eye was still keen, and his voice strong and sonorous as ever. No time must be lost—no risk heeded—if the great stake for which he was playing was to be won.

“Let the chamber be cleared,” said Henry.
“Our discourse must be strictly private.”

This being precisely what Hertford desired, he took care that the king's behests should be promptly obeyed.

“We are alone, sire,” he said, as soon as all

the attendants, including Doctor Butts and the surgeon, had withdrawn.


"Hertford," said Henry, as the earl approached him, "you gaze on me as if you thought me worse. Deny it not, man—I can read your true opinion in your looks. No wonder I should appear greatly disordered. Last night was a dreadful one to me, Hertford. Not to purchase a fresh term of sovereignty would I endure such another. I cannot recal it without horror. I underwent the torments of the damned; and prayed—un-availingly prayed—for release from suffering. Thou knowest I am not idly superstitious—nor a believer in old wives' fables. Prepare then to credit what I shall relate, however surprising and improbable it may seem to thee; and deem not that my nerves are shaken by sickness."

"Whatever your majesty shall tell me I shall infallibly believe—doubt it not," replied Hertford. "And I am well assured that your nerves are firmly strung as ever."

"Thou liest!—thou dost not think so—but they are. To my narration, however—and give the more heed to it, inasmuch as thou wilt find it concerns thee as well as myself."

"Is there a ghost in the story, my liege?" inquired Hertford.

"Be silent, and thou shalt hear," replied Henry, sternly. "Last night, during a brief interval of ease between my fits of agony, I was trying to court slumber, when I heard the bell toll midnight—I heard it distinctly, for I counted the strokes—and as the last vibration of sound died away, I turned to Butts to bid him give me a potion. He was gone, while Ferrys, who should have been watchful, had sunk within the chair nigh which thou standest, apparently overcome by sleep. I was about to awake and chide him—and should have done so, had not all power of speech and movement suddenly left me, as I saw a phantom—a grisly, ghastly phantom—glide towards my bed. Whom thinkest thou I beheld?"



"Nay, I cannot guess, my liege," replied Hertford.

"Surrey, new-risen from his bloody grave—his noble features livid and disfigured—his locks clotted with gore—his stately neck sundered by the axe—yet, marvellous to say, set again upon the shoulders—a spectacle horrible to look upon—yet I instantly knew him. His eyes seemed to have life in them, and to fascinate like the basilisk, for, as he fixed them upon me, I could not avert my gaze. Then his lips moved, and with a gesture of menace such as I had never brooked from mortal man, and in accents more terrible than had ever reached my ears, he told me he came to summon me before Heaven's Judgment-Throne; and that I must appear there ere the bell should again toll forth the hour of midnight."

"Let not this weigh upon your mind, my gracious liege," said Hertford, not wholly devoid of superstitious fear himself, though he strove thus to reassure the king. "I was in your chamber last

night at midnight, and long after, and I saw and heard nothing such as you relate. 'Twas an ill dream—but only a dream. I pray you, therefore, dismiss these fancies. They are engendered by the sickness under which you labour.”

“No, Hertford,” replied Henry, in a tone of profound conviction, “it was neither dream, nor product of diseased imagination. I could not have conjured up such a spectre if I would—and I would not if I could,” he added, shuddering. “I saw Surrey plain enough, standing where thou art now. I will not tell thee all the spirit uttered of vengeance and retribution—but it prophesied a bloody ending to thee and to thy brother.”

“I have no fear of the prediction,” said Hertford, in a tone that somewhat belied his words; “and I beseech your highness not to attach any importance to the vision. You have told me how the spirit came to you, but you have not explained how it departed?”

“I know not how it vanished,” replied Henry.



"For a time, I remained spell-bound, as if under the influence of nightmare; but at last, by a mighty effort, I broke the charm that seemed to bind me, and called out. I then found the spirit gone, and Butts standing in its place. Ferrys also was awake."

"All is now explained," said Hertford. "It was the nightmare that oppressed your highness. You need have no fear."


"Fear!—I have none!" ejaculated the king. "No living man ever made the Eighth Henry tremble, nor can any dead man do it. This spirit may be right as regards thee and thy brother, but I will prove it wrong in one particular."

"By living beyond the hour appointed by it, I trust, my liege," said Hertford. "In one of mortal mould such a prediction would have been treasonable, but spirits are exempt from common penalties."

"The jest is ill-timed, my lord," observed Henry, sternly. "I will balk the ghost if I can,

by living till to-morrow; but at all events I will balk him by consigning Norfolk to the block. I will have the duke's head before I die. This will I do, because the ghost told me, as if in mockery, that I should be disappointed. I will send his father to bear him company."

"Whatever may have prompted this decision, I am glad, right glad, it has been come to," said Hertford. "Were Norfolk permitted to live he would undoubtedly cause the greatest embarrassment to Prince Edward during his minority. He might do more. Assisted by the Pope, the Emperor Charles V., and their partisans, he might even succeed in transferring the crown from the young prince's head to that of the Princess Mary, and so undo all the work that you, sire, have so long and so assiduously laboured to accomplish. He might check the Reformation, as well as alter the succession. You have delivered Prince Edward from one dangerous enemy, Surrey, but the other, and the more powerful foe, yet lives."



"Edward shall never be molested by him," rejoined the king. "He shall be beheaded to-morrow morning. Get the warrant for his execution at once, and deliver it to the Constable of the Tower."

"Why not to-night?" demanded Hertford.

"At this hour!" exclaimed Henry, sternly. "A secret execution would be set down to fear or anger—and I feel neither. No!—to-morrow morning will be soon enough. I shall not change my mind. Go for the warrant. Wherefore do you linger?"

"If I might venture to urge one matter on your majesty," hesitated Hertford.

"Ha! what is it?" demanded the king.

"You have wisely and deliberately made all your arrangements for the future, but you have neglected the main point—the signing of your will. Here is the instrument, sire, which you have committed to my custody," he added, producing a coffer, and taking from it several sheets of paper,

tacked together by a braid of green and white ribbon. "It lacks only your signature, or the impress of your royal stamp, to be complete."

"Leave it with me," said Henry, taking the will. "Perchance I may make some alterations in it."

"Alterations!" exclaimed the earl, startled out of his habitual caution.

"Ay, alterations! Wherefore not?" cried the king, sharply and suspiciously. "Marry, if it shall please me to erase your name from the list of my executors, I can do so, methinks?"

"Far be it from me to dispute your highness's power to make any changes you may deem proper," replied Hertford, almost abjectly. "But I implore you not to delay the signing."

"You had best trouble me no more," rejoined Henry, sternly. "About your business straight. Send Sir John Gage to me. I desire to consult him."

"Will none other than Sir John Gage serve your turn?" asked Hertford.

“Ha! what is this? Dar’st thou to trifle with me? No one but Gage *will* serve my turn. There! thou art answered. Get thee gone!”

Scarcely able to conceal his uneasiness, Hertford made a profound obeisance, and departed.

VIII.

IN WHAT MANNER THE KING'S WILL WAS SIGNED.

No sooner had Hertford quitted the chamber than Butts and Ferrys, with a host of pages and henchmen, re-entered it. The physician hurried towards his royal patient's couch, and proceeded to feel his pulse.

"What think you of me?" demanded Henry, looking fixedly at him. "Any change for the better?—ha!"

"None, sire," replied the physician, gravely.

"I understand," rejoined the king, with great



firmness. "Shall I last till to-morrow? Speak truth; I can bear it."

"If Heaven wills it, your majesty will last so long," answered the physician, with increased gravity. "You are now in far mightier hands than mine. I can do little more to aid you."

Henry bore this dread announcement bravely. Leaning back upon his pillow, and looking upwards, he seemed for a while to be silently engaged in prayer. The physician signed to the attendants to keep still, so that the king was wholly undisturbed.

At length, the profound silence was broken by Henry, who, slightly raising himself, and turning to Butts, said, "May I have a draught of wine? Methinks it would do me good."

"Ay, marry! sire, here is a stoup of your favourite Gascoigne wine," replied the physician, filling a silver cup with the generous fluid, and presenting it to him. "I am right glad to find you so stout of heart."

"Enough!" exclaimed the king, putting away the goblet with disgust after placing it to his lips; "the wine likes me not. It tastes of blood—pah!"

"Will it please you to eat a mouthful of chicken-cullis?" asked Butts.

"No ; I will eat nothing more," replied Henry. "Let Sir John Gage be sent for with all despatch. Why comes he not?"

"He shall be summoned instantly," replied Butts, issuing the necessary orders, and then returning to the king's bedside. "Pardon me, sire," he continued, in a low, earnest voice, "if I venture to remind you that you have left a most important matter undone. Your will, I perceive, is lying before you. Delay not the signing of it, I beseech you!"

"I will not sign it till I have spoken with Gage," replied Henry, peremptorily. "There will be time to do it then."

"Pray Heaven there may!" exclaimed the physician. "Not a moment ought to be lost."

"Why comes not Sir John?" demanded Henry, after a pause, in a loud, fierce tone. "Send for him again; and bid him come quickly, if he values his life."

"He is here, my liege," replied Butts, as the Constable of the Tower entered the chamber, with a paper in his hand.

"Ha! you are come at last, Sir John," cried the king, sharply. "Leave us alone together," he added.

Whereupon, the chamber was at once vacated by all save Gage. But, ere the private conference began, the arras on the further side of the king's couch was cautiously raised, and Hertford stole into the room, and, unperceived either by Gage or the king, concealed himself behind the thick curtains of the bed. The stealthy entrance of the earl was favoured by the circumstance that this part of the chamber was almost buried in darkness.

"What paper hast thou in thine hand?" demanded Henry of the Constable.

"One I would rather be without," answered Gage, gruffly—"the warrant for Norfolk's execution to-morrow."

"See it done," rejoined Henry, coldly.

"If it be done, your last act will be one of injustice and cruelty," retorted the Constable.

"How knowest thou it will be my last act?" said Henry, furiously. "I may live long enough to have thine own head as well as Norfolk's."

"I had rather you had mine than his," said Gage; "and your own ingratitude would be less. Norfolk has served you longer and better than I have done."

"Norfolk is dangerous to my son, and therefore he must be removed—and quickly. No more words! Again I say to thee, see it done!"

"I like it not," grumbled the Constable. "'Tis a foul deed."

"Hold thy peace! and turn we to another matter. Thou hast assisted at the debates concerning my will, and know'st its contents generally.

Thou know'st, also, that I have appointed sixteen executors and twelve counsellors, and that amongst the executors is Hertford."

"This I know!" returned Gage.

"My mind misgives me as to Hertford," pursued Henry. "Something I have noticed in him of late makes me suspect him of sinister designs. I fear he aims at too much power, and will not be altogether true to Edward."

"Yet the prince is his nephew, and must therefore be most dear to him," observed Gage.

"He ought to be," rejoined Henry. "You judge of others by yourself, good Sir John—but all are not of your stamp. If I thought my suspicions of Hertford were correct, I would strike out his name."

"Nay, do not that, I entreat you, my liege. I think him faithful," said the Constable.

"Thy opinion is ever honest, and I will be guided by it," said the king. "Hertford's name shall stand, though I had determined otherwise."

But I will control him. At present, thou and Sir Thomas Seymour are mere counsellors, without voice or power. Ye both shall be executors, and have equal power with Hertford."

"I cannot answer for Sir Thomas Seymour," rejoined Gage; "but, for myself, I may say that I desire not the office."

"I will have no refusal," said Henry, authoritatively. "Sir Thomas is Edward's favourite uncle. The boy loves him, and is beloved in return. Sir Thomas will guard him well—as thou wilt—ha?"

"Sir Thomas is more to be feared than his brother, according to my judgment," observed Gage.

"There thou art wrong," rejoined Henry. "Sir Thomas is rash and headstrong, but trusty as steel. I have tried him."

"Humph!" ejaculated the Constable, dubiously. "Since your majesty designs to make these changes in your will, why should Gardiner be left

out? He is the ablest amongst the prelates, and of great experience in politics. Moreover, he has done your highness many notable services."

"For the which he hath been well rewarded," interrupted Henry, sternly. "I will have none of him. Gardiner hath ability enough, but he is a subtle intriguer, and would set ye all by the ears. I can manage him, but no one else can. Thou art a Papist, Sir John, hence thy recommendation of Gardiner. But he shall have no power to breed discord in the Church when I am gone. It is quite enough that Wriothesley should be retained—I had thoughts of erasing his name likewise, and substituting the Marquis of Dorset."

"I pray you do not, sire," said Gage.

"Nay, thou mayst spare thy suing. I am content to keep the Lord Chancellor. I do not think he will do much mischief, and he will counterbalance Cranmer. Haste, then, and fetch Sir Thomas Seymour, and let William Clerc be in

attendance with my secret stamp. My fingers are so swollen that I cannot use the pen."

"Heavens! is it possible your majesty can have been so imprudent as to put off the signing of your will till now? You might have died last night; and then——"

"Prate not, but do as I have commanded thee," interrupted the king. "Yet stay!—is Cranmer in the palace?"

"Ay, my liege; his grace is but newly returned from Croydon," replied the Constable.

"That is well. Let him come to me anon," said the king, more feebly. "This talk has wearied me. I feel as if I could sleep. Send Butts to watch by me, but let me not be otherwise disturbed for an hour."

"But the execution of the will, sire?—it is most urgent," cried the Constable.

But Henry made no reply. He had already begun to breathe heavily and stertorously.

After gazing at him for a moment, as if

in doubt whether to rouse him, Gage left the room.

No sooner was he gone, than Hertford peered from behind the curtain; and seeing that Henry was asleep—and indeed his loud breathing proclaimed the fact—he stepped cautiously forward.

At the same moment, Butts entered the chamber. Alarmed by Henry's breathing, without noticing the earl, he rushed to the king's bedside.

"'Tis as I feared," he said, after a pause, turning to Hertford. "This is the lethargy of death. He will never wake again—or, if he should, his mind will wander. Great Henry's power has left him. The absolute monarch is all helpless now."

"I would not rouse him from his trance, but let him go, were it not that the will remains unsigned!" exclaimed Hertford, distractedly. "I must wake him," he added, rushing towards the bed.

"It is in vain, I tell you," said Butts, staying him.

"Let me go, sir," said the earl, furiously. "I shall go mad if I lose this great prize."

"You need not lose it," replied Butts. "The will is here. Take it, and get it stamped. The keeper of the royal signet may be bribed to acquiesce, and witnesses can be procured in the same way."

"Your counsel is good, but it cannot be followed," cried Hertford. "Sir John Gage knows that his majesty designed to make some alteration in his will, and that it is unsigned. The Constable is impracticable; there is no purchasing his silence. All is lost."

"Not so," rejoined the ready-witted physician, apparently troubled with as few scruples as Hertford himself. "As yet, no one but ourselves is aware of the king's condition. The signing of the will shall not be disputed, even by Gage. Bring hither the keeper of the signet; bring also the Earls of Essex and Arundel, Sir William Paget, Sir William Herbert, and any others upon

whom you can rely, to serve as witnesses. Leave the rest to me. About it quick!"

"It shall be done; and if the scheme prosper, I shall not be wanting in gratitude to its bold contriver," replied Hertford. "While I am on my errand, do you give orders, as if from his majesty, that no one but myself and those you have mentioned be allowed to enter the chamber. Our plan will be marred infallibly if Gage and my brother gain admittance."

Butts promised compliance, and Hertford disappeared by the secret entrance.

The physician next wetted a napkin, and applied it to Henry's brow, shifting the pillows at the same time, so that the breathing of the dying monarch became sensibly relieved. He then drew the curtains about the bed, so as to hide in a great measure the upper part of the king's person; and afterwards placed a small table, with writing materials upon it, at a little distance from the couch on the left; so disposing the lights within

the chamber that the bed was left completely in darkness.

These precautions taken, he proceeded to the ante-chamber, and calling the chief usher, gave him the orders that had been suggested by Hertford.

He was only just in time, for he had scarcely retired when the Constable of the Tower and Sir Thomas Seymour made their appearance; but they were refused admittance to the king's chamber. In vain Seymour, who was full of anxiety and impatience, remonstrated. The ushers were inexorable.

Ere long came a grave-looking personage in a black robe, with a small box under his arm. This was William Clerc, the keeper of the royal signet. He was allowed instant entrance.

Shortly afterwards came the Earl of Hertford, accompanied by the Earls of Essex and Arundel, and the others designated by Butts, all wearing countenances of extreme gravity, as if bound upon

some object of the utmost seriousness and importance. Bowing solemnly to Gage and Seymour, they passed on, and were instantly admitted.

"This is very strange," remarked Gage. "I cannot understand it. His majesty told me himself that he would not be disturbed for an hour. Are you quite sure, sir, that the orders are express against our admittance?" he added to the chief usher.

"Quite sure, Sir John," replied the individual addressed, bowing respectfully. "Doctor Butts delivered them to me himself."

"Hertford has outwitted us, Sir John," remarked Seymour. "We shall neither of us be executors."

"For my own part, I care not," rejoined Gage. "I do not covet the distinction. But I hope the king's intentions will be strictly carried out."

Not long after this came Cranmer, who marched straight towards the door, but was detained like the others. The archbishop then joined Gage

and Seymour, and was talking with them of the king's dangerous condition, and deeply deploring it, when Butts appeared at the door, and after a word from him to the usher, all three were admitted.

What they beheld was this. Grouped round the little table, with writing materials upon it, were the persons who had subscribed the will as witnesses. Nearer the darkened couch, but with his back towards it, stood William Clere, by whom, previous to its attestation, the will had been stamped at the top of the first page and the end of the last, and who had just delivered the instrument, thus signed and attested, to Hertford.

Butts explained to Cranmer and the others that his majesty had had just sufficient strength to direct the stamping of his will, but that immediately after this was done, and the attestation completed, he was struck speechless.

"It is marvellous that he lasted so long," con-

tinued the wily physician. "He spoke so feebly, that I alone could catch his words. I fear he will scarcely know your grace," he added, preceding Cranmer to the bed, and drawing back the curtain so as to expose the woful figure of the king, who was now evidently *in extremis*; "he hath but little life left."

"I will try," replied the archbishop. Taking the king's hand in his own, he drew close to him, and in tones of the utmost earnestness exhorted him to place his trust in Christ, and to call upon His mercy, beseeching him, if he had any consciousness left, to give him some token that he trusted in the Lord.

Henry seemed to understand what was said to him, for he slightly strained the primate's hand.

After a while, the archbishop turned to the assemblage, now gathered round the bed, and, in a voice of the deepest solemnity, said, "It has pleased Heaven to call to its mercy our great king. Pray ye all for the repose of his soul!"

Upon this, they all knelt down, and, while they were doing so, the bell tolled forth the hour of midnight.

Then Hertford called to mind what the king had said to him concerning the summons by the spirit, and he trembled exceedingly.

Thus far the First Book.

BOOK II.



THE LORD PROTECTOR.

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that Henry's death was kept profoundly secret. On Monday, the last day of January, 1547, the Commons were sent for to the Lords, and the important intelligence was communicated to them by the Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, who, at that same time, acquainted them with such portions of the late king's will as it was deemed expedient to make public. The interval between the monarch's death and this public announcement of it had been employed


I.

HOW THE EARL OF HERTFORD AND SIR ANTHONY BROWN
ANNOUNCED HIS FATHER'S DEATH TO PRINCE EDWARD.

FOR two days Henry's demise was kept profoundly secret. On Monday, the last day of January, 1547, the Commons were sent for to the Lords, and the important intelligence was communicated to them by the Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, who, at that same time, acquainted them with such portions of the late king's will as it was deemed expedient to make public. The interval between the monarch's death and this public announcement of it had been employed

by Hertford and his partisans in organising their plans, and debating the measures to be adopted during the new reign. Most of the upper council, in whom the administrative authority was lodged, had been won over by Hertford's promises, and it was not thought that any serious opposition would be offered by such as could not be corrupted—amongst whom were Cranmer and Tunstal. The only real obstacle in the way of the aspiring earl appeared to be the Lord Chancellor; but even he might be brought over, or, if troublesome, could be put out. Thus Hertford felt secure, and determined upon the immediate realisation of his schemes of aggrandisement.

As regarded the Duke of Norfolk, Henry's death, occurring when it did, at a moment of such extraordinary peril to that illustrious nobleman, was a piece of great good fortune, and was regarded by many who adhered to the old belief as nothing less than providential. Had Hertford, however, been allowed his own way, the duke





The Earl of Hertford and Sir Anthony Brown announcing his Father's death to Prince Edward.

would infallibly have been executed in accordance with Henry's warrant; but Sir John Gage resolutely refused to obey it, threatening, if the matter were persisted in, to publish abroad the king's death. By these means Norfolk was saved, though he was still detained a prisoner in the Tower.

The young Prince Edward himself was kept in ignorance of the loss he had sustained until the Sunday, when it was announced to him by his elder uncle in person, attended by Sir Anthony Brown, master of the horse, and devoted to the earl. The young prince was staying at Hertford with the Princess Elizabeth, whither they had been sent after their last interview with their royal father. The earl and his companion found the prince engaged in reading Ludovicus Vives's "Instruction of a Christian Woman" to his sister. Closing the book, and quitting the reading-desk near which he was stationed, Edward immediately advanced to meet them. He was greatly affected by the intelligence which they

brought him, though not unprepared for it, and though it was conveyed in terms and in a manner calculated to rob it of much of its distressing effect.

Kneeling down before him, the earl and Sir Anthony saluted him as king, and tendered him their homage. Edward was too much afflicted to make any suitable reply. He turned away, and flinging himself into the arms of his sister, who was standing beside him, and equally grieved with himself, he mingled his tears with hers. "Never," says Sir John Hayward, describing the occurrence, "was sorrow more sweetly set forth, their faces seeming rather to beautify their sorrow, than their sorrow to cloud their faces. Their young years, their excellent beauties, their lovely and lively interchange of complaints in such sort graced their grief, as the most iron eyes at that time present were drawn thereby into society of their tears."

Deeming it best to let his royal nephew's grief have free course, Hertford did not offer him any

consolation at first, but arising from his kneeling posture, he withdrew to a little distance with Sir Anthony.

"We have lost the best of fathers, Elizabeth," said Edward, at last, looking up at her face through his tears. "But he is in heaven, and therefore we need not mourn for him. Yet I cannot help it." And he wept afresh.

"Be comforted, gentle brother," said the princess, tenderly. "Our father is happily released from suffering. I did not think we should ever see him again on earth. You must be a man now, since you are king."

"Alas!" exclaimed Edward, sobbing. "My heart sinks at the thought of it."

"And mine swells at the bare idea," rejoined the princess. "Cheer up, dear brother—or I ought rather to say, my gracious lord and master, for you are so now. How strange that sounds, Edward! Marry! it must be mighty fine to be king—to wear the diadem, and sit in state, to

swear great oaths, and have all tremble at your frown—as they used to do at our father's."

"Elizabeth!" said Edward, with something of reproach. "Is this a season for jesting?"

"Nay, I do not jest," she replied, seriously. "I but gave utterance to thoughts that arose unbidden in my breast. I have ever spoken without restraint to you, dearest brother."

"And I trust you ever will do so," he rejoined, affectionately. "I love you, sweet Bess. You shall be my chief counsellor. I will confide all my secrets to you."

"Your uncle Hertford will not let you," she returned. "He is watching us narrowly now—trying to make out what you are saying to me. Have a care of him, Edward."

"I would my uncle Sir Thomas Seymour were here," said the young king; "but I am told he has been denied access to me."

"By whom?—by my lord of Hertford?" demanded Elizabeth.

"Very likely," returned Edward. "But I *will* see him now I am king. Sir Thomas is a great favourite of yours, Bess?—ha!"

"Sir Thomas discourses pleasantly, dances well, and hath an excellent ear for music," she replied.

"And is very handsome withal—own you think so, Bess?"

"Nay, I have never bestowed enough consideration upon him to declare if he be handsome or otherwise," she replied, blushing slightly.

"Out on my unruly tongue for leading me thus astray!" exclaimed Edward, suddenly checking himself. "A moment ago I chided you for unseasonable levity, dear Bess, and I now am indulging in it myself. Come with me to my uncle Hertford."

With this he took her hand, and the young pair slowly, and with much dignity, directed their steps towards the earl, who instantly advanced with Sir Anthony to meet them.

"I am glad to see your grace look somewhat

lighter of heart," said Hertford, bowing profoundly; "for though grief at so great a loss is natural, and indeed commendable, you have many necessary duties to fulfil which cannot be delayed, and the discharge whereof will serve to distract you from the thoughts of your bereavement. I am come, with Sir Anthony Brown, your master of the horse, to escort your majesty to Enfield, where you will sleep to-night. To-morrow you will be conducted to the Tower, there to meet all the lords, spiritual and temporal, who will assemble to tender their allegiance. Have you much preparation to make ere setting out?"

"Not much, my lord—not any, indeed," replied Edward. "I am ready to attend you now. But I would fain bid farewell to my preceptors—unless they are to go with me, which I should much prefer."

"They shall follow anon," returned Hertford. "But you will have so much to do at first, that you must, perforce, discontinue your studies for a

while. Your grace will be pleased to say nothing to your preceptors as to what takes you hence, for the proclamation will not be made before to-morrow, and till then, for reasons I will presently explain, the utmost secrecy as to the demise of your royal father must be observed. This premised, I will cause them to be summoned. Ho, there!" he added to an attendant. "Let Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox be called. His highness is about to set forth for Enfield."

"Nay, I will go to them," cried Edward.

"Your majesty's pardon," rejoined Hertford, in a low tone; "they must now wait on you."

Presently afterwards two ancient personages, of very thoughtful and studious aspect, clad alike in long black gowns bordered with fur, and having velvet caps on their bald heads, entered the hall. The foremost of them, the learned Sir John Cheke, carried a ponderous folio under his arm; the other was the no less erudite Doctor Cox. Being afflicted with gout, and requiring the support of a

staff, Doctor Cox came on rather more slowly than his fellow-tutor.

Sprung from an ancient family, a ripe scholar, a proficient in oratory, and remarkably well versed in the Platonic philosophy, Sir John Cheke was the author of several learned treatises, and is described by Doctor Thomas Wilson, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth, who knew him well, as "that rare learned man, and singular ornament of the land." His sister was wedded to Cecil, afterwards the great Lord Burleigh. To philosophy, Cheke's fellow-preceptor, Doctor Cox, added a profound knowledge of divinity. Both Edward's tutors were extremely zealous Reformers, and it was no doubt owing to their judicious training that the young king became one of the brightest ornaments and most effectual supporters of the Protestant cause.

Edward flew to meet his preceptors, and, running up to Doctor Cox, cried, "Lean on me, good doctor—lean on me!"

Cox respectfully declined his aid, but suffered him to take his hand, and so lead him towards the Earl of Hertford, who was in the act of courteously saluting Sir John Cheke.

"My royal pupil tells me your lordship is about to take him hence," said Doctor Cox, bowing to the earl. "I am sorry his studies will be interrupted."

"They will only be interrupted for a time, doctor," replied Hertford. "Most like he will not return here," he added, with a certain significance, "but you and Sir John Cheke will rejoin him. His highness derives too much benefit from the able tuition of ye both to be longer deprived of it than is absolutely needful. Ye spare no pains with him, learned sirs, of that I am well satisfied."

"Few pains are needed, my lord," replied Cheke. "More credit is due to his highness than to us for the rapid progress he hath made. Trouble or difficulty with him we have none, for

he hath a rare capacity for learning, and zeal and industry equal to his ability; and that is saying no light thing. He never tires of reading, but turns from profane history to philosophy, and from philosophy to the Holy Scriptures and theology. He is mastering all the liberal sciences. Logic he hath studied, as your lordship knows, and at this present he is learning Aristotle's Ethics in Greek, and, having finished with it, he will take up the Rhetoric."

"I can corroborate all Sir John hath advanced," observed Doctor Cox. "His highness needs no spur to study—nay, his application is so great that he rather requires to be checked than stimulated. He hath recently read Cato, the Satallitium of Vives, and the fables of Æsopus. As to Latin, he knows it better than many an English boy of his age knows his mother tongue. Peradventure, your lordship hath seen his letters in that language to the king his father?"

"I pray you speak not of them, dear doctor," cried Edward, bursting into tears.

"I crave your highness's pardon!" exclaimed the worthy man, who was most tenderly attached to his royal pupil. "I would not pain you for the world."

"I know it," replied Edward, regarding him through his streaming eyes with almost filial affection; "but my heart is too full just now, and will overflow."

"Your accounts of my royal nephew's progress are most gratifying, learned sir," observed Hertford, anxious to turn the discourse. "That you have avouched nothing more than the truth, I am sure; yet ye almost make him out a prodigy."

"And a prodigy he is," cried Sir John Cheke, with enthusiasm. "Few there be like him."

"Nay, my good uncle, you must distrust what my kind preceptors are pleased to say of me," re-

marked Edward. "They view me with too partial eyes."

At this juncture an interruption, anything but agreeable to Hertford, was offered by the unexpected entrance of Sir Thomas Seymour, evidently, from his looks and the state of his apparel, fresh from a rapid journey. Disregarding the angry glances directed against him by his brother, Sir Thomas doffed his cap, flung himself on his knee before Edward, and, taking the youthful monarch's hand, exclaimed, "God save your grace! I hoped to be first to tell you that the sovereignty of this realm hath devolved upon you, but I find I have been anticipated."

"I thank you heartily, gentle uncle," replied Edward, "not for your news," he added, sadly, "for I had liefer you had brought me any other, but for your display of loyalty and attachment."

"Have I and my fellow-preceptor been standing all this while in the presence of our gracious

sovereign without knowing it?" exclaimed Sir John Cheke, as Seymour arose. "I pray you pardon us, and accept our homage."

So saying, he and Doctor Cox knelt down before the young king, who gave them each a hand.

"I now see my inadvertence," said Cox, "and I again pray your majesty to pardon it."

"Think of it no more," replied Edward. "Arise, my beloved monitors and preceptors. It is true I am your sovereign lord, but you must still only regard me as a pupil."

"You have done wrong in coming here, sir, without authority," said the Earl of Hertford, in a stern tone, to his brother, "and will incur the displeasure of the council."

"So I incur not his majesty's displeasure, I shall rest perfectly easy as to the council's anger," rejoined Seymour, in a tone of haughty indifference.

"Having discharged an errand which you have most officiously and unwarrantably taken upon

yourself," pursued the earl, with increasing wrath, "you will be pleased to depart.—How! do you loiter?"

"His majesty has not commanded me to withdraw, and I only obey him," returned Seymour, carelessly.

"Nay, my good lord," said Edward to the earl, "my uncle Sir Thomas seems to have ridden hard, and must need some refreshment after his hasty journey. That obtained, he can accompany us to Enfield."

"He cannot go with us," cried Hertford, forgetting himself in the heat of the moment.

"How?" exclaimed Edward, a frown crossing over his face, and giving him a slight look of his father. Without another word he then turned to Sir Thomas, and said, "Prithee, make haste, gentle uncle. Get what you lack, and then prepare to ride with us to Enfield."

"All thanks to your majesty, but I want

nothing, rejoined Seymour. "I am ready to set forth with you at once."

The Princess Elizabeth, who had been standing a little apart with Sir Anthony Brown, and who appeared highly pleased with her royal brother's assumption of authority, here clapped her hands for an attendant, and commanded a cup of wine for Sir Thomas Seymour.

"I will not refuse this," said Seymour, when the wine was brought. "May your majesty reign long and prosperously!" he added, raising the goblet to his lips.

Having bidden adieu to his preceptors, and taken a tender leave of his sister, telling her to be of good cheer, and assuring her that their separation should not be long, Edward then informed the Earl of Hertford that he was ready to set forth, who thereupon ceremoniously conducted him to the door. They were followed by Sir Anthony Brown and Sir Thomas Seymour, the

latter of whom lingered for a moment to whisper a few words to the Princess Elizabeth.

Horses and an escort were in readiness outside; and thus the youthful king, accompanied by both his uncles, rode to Enfield, where he rested that night.


II.

HOW KING EDWARD THE SIXTH WAS PROCLAIMED AT WESTMINSTER; HOW HE RODE FROM ENFIELD TO THE TOWER OF LONDON; AND HOW THE KEYS OF THE TOWER WERE DELIVERED TO HIM BY THE CONSTABLE.

NEXT morning, Henry's demise was published abroad, and as soon as the news, which spread like wildfire, became generally known, an immense crowd collected before the palace of Westminster, where barriers were erected, and other preparations made, for proclaiming his youthful successor.

A hard frost prevailed, and the day was clear

and bright, though extremely cold. The general aspect of the crowd was anything but sorrowful, and few regrets were expressed for the departed monarch, though Henry had been by no means unpopular with the middle and lower ranks of his subjects, who approved of his severity so long as it did not touch themselves, but was merely exercised against the nobility. They did not, however, like his "Whip with Six Lashes," as the terrible statute of the Six Articles was commonly designated, for it cut right and left, and might hit any of them. All were glad he was gone, and many a remark was boldly uttered which would have caused the speaker to become acquainted with the Marshalsea or the Fleet in the king's lifetime. Most of the women — and there were plenty of them amidst the throng — loaded his memory with opprobrium on account of his treatment of his spouses; but their husbands jestingly retorted that he therein showed his wis-



dom, since the readiest way of getting rid of a troublesome wife was to cut off her head.

But by far the most audacious speech was uttered by a tall gaunt monk in the habit of a Franciscan friar, who, mounting a flight of steps, thus harangued the crowd in a loud voice: "Know ye me not, good folk?" he said. "I am that priest who preached before the king, now lying dead in yonder palace. I am that Father Peto who preached before King Henry in his chapel at Greenwich, and who told him to his face that heavy judgments would come upon him for his sinful doings—I am he who fearlessly told the king that many lying prophets had deceived him, but that I, as a true Micaiah, warned him that the dogs should lick his blood, even as they had licked the blood of Ahab. For the which prophetic words I was condemned as a rebel, a slanderer, a dog, and a traitor. Nevertheless, my words shall come to pass. Henry, the Ahab

of England, is dead, and dogs will lick his blood."

Awe-stricken and astounded at the boldness of the Franciscan, many of the crowd looked round, expecting a pursuivant to ride up and arrest him. But the officers chanced to be otherwise engaged at the moment, and Father Peto, slowly descending from the steps, mingled with the throng, and was soon lost to view. The incident, however, produced a deep impression upon the assemblage, and the monk's words were long afterwards remembered.

Meanwhile, a lofty stage had been reared within the barriers in front of the palace. The throng was kept back, and order preserved, by porters of the royal household, who made good use of their staves upon the costards of such as pressed forward too rudely, by tall yeomen of the guard, having the king's cognisance worked in gold on their breasts, and halberds in their hands, and by mounted pursuivants of arms, who rode con-

stantly from point to point. Around the stage, upon the ground, was drawn up a bevy of trumpeters in embroidered coats, and with silken banners on their trumpets. All being, at last, in readiness, five heralds in coats of arms mounted the platform, and stationed themselves upon it, awaiting the lords coming forth from the Parliament House; and when this occurred, one of the trumpets blew thrice, making the palace walls echo with the shrill blasts. Then there was a deep silence throughout the hitherto noisy multitude, in the midst of which Somerset herald stepped forward, and in a loud voice made proclamation in the following terms: "Edward the Sixth, by the grace of God King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and of the Church of England, and also Ireland, in earth Supreme Head, greeting,—Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God on Friday last to call to his infinite mercy the most excellent high and mighty Prince Henry, of most noble and famous memory, our

most dear and entirely-beloved father, whose soul God pardon!——”

Thereupon the herald stopped, and immediately the whole band of trumpets blew a loud and courageous blast, stirring up every bosom. When this ceased, Garter advanced, and, at the top of his voice, cried out, “God save our noble King Edward!” upon which a tremendous shout rent the air. Many a fervent ejaculation was uttered for the young king’s prosperity; but some old folk who had the reputation of wisdom shook their heads, and said, bodingly, in the language of Scripture, “Wo to the country whose king is a child!”

In the midst of these various expressions of sentiment, while some were full of joyful anticipations, and others, though very few in comparison with the rest, indulged in gloomy forebodings, while the lords, who had tarried for the proclamation, were moving away, and the heralds descending from the stage, a distant roar of ordnance

was heard from the east, and a cry arose that the young king was going to the Tower; upon which the assemblage began to disperse, and a large portion moved off in the direction of the old fortress, such as could afford it taking boat at Westminster and going down the river to London-bridge, but the majority marching past the fair cross of Charing, erected by Edward I. to his queen, Eleanor, and along the Strand, to the City. Many of the lords entered the barges at the privy-stairs, near the palace, while others, anxious to make greater display, rode through the streets to the Tower, attended by large retinues of servants. The river was alive with craft of all sorts and sizes, from the stately and gilded barge, propelled by two ranks of rowers, to the small but crowded wherry. But it was below bridge, and near the Tower, that the greatest stir and excitement prevailed. Here the river was thronged, and much difficulty was experienced by the smaller barks either in remaining stationary or in approaching

the landing-places. All the barges, balingers, pinnaces, caravels, and great ships moored off the Tower, many of which had painted and gilded masts, were decorated with flags and streamers. Amongst the larger vessels were the *Mary Rose* and the famous *Harry Grace à Dieu*, the latter standing out of the water like a castle, with two towers at the stern. No sooner did the ordnance of the fortress announce the approach of the young king, than all of these ships replied with their heavy guns, which they then carried on the upper deck only, the sides of the vessels not being pierced. By these discharges the tall ships, Traitors' Gate and the dominant White Tower itself, above which floated the royal standard, were shrouded in smoke.

Simultaneously with the proclamation of the new king at Westminster, a like announcement had been made by sound of trumpet in the City of London, under the authority of a sealed commission, by four heralds in their coats of arms—

namely, Clarencieux, Carlisle, Windsor, and Chester—assisted by the lord mayor, the aldermen, and the sheriffs in their scarlet robes. Not a single dissentient voice was heard, but, on the contrary, the proclamation was received with immense cheering.

On the same day, about noon, the youthful prince, on whom the crown had devolved, set forth from the palace of Enfield for the Tower, accompanied by his two uncles, by his master of horse, and a large party of noblemen, knights, pensioners, esquires, and others, all very richly attired, and making an extremely gallant show. From his youth and beauty, Edward excited the admiration of all who beheld him. He was arrayed in a gown of cloth of silver, embroidered with damask gold, and wore a doublet of white velvet, wrought with Venice silver, garnished with rubies and diamonds. His velvet cap, with a white feather in it, was ornamented with a brooch of diamonds; his girdle was worked with Venice

silver, and decked with precious stones and knots of pearls, and his buskins were of white velvet. His milk-white charger, a noble-looking but easy-paced animal, was caparisoned in crimson satin, embroidered with pearls and damask gold, and the bridle had wide reins of red leather. For his years, Edward rode remarkably well, maintaining his seat with much grace, and promising in time to become a consummate horseman, like his uncle Sir Thomas Seymour. By the young king's express command, in contravention of the Earl of Hertford's arrangements, his favourite uncle rode close behind him, and was not unfrequently called forward to his royal nephew's side. Mounted on a fiery Arabian courser, black as jet, but whose movements he controlled apparently by his will, magnificently attired, as his wont, in embroidered velvet cassock and silken doublet, by the stateliness of his person, and the haughtiness of his bearing, Seymour threw into shade all the other nobles composing the king's train, and drew all

eyes upon himself, after Edward had been gazed upon. Elated by his royal nephew's notice, his breast swelled with secret aspirations, and he listened to the promptings of his towering and insane ambition. Whenever he encountered the stern looks of his brother, he replied by a glance of fierce defiance.

In this way the royal cavalcade passed through Tottenham, where a large assemblage was collected, and where numerous clerks and priests were stationed near the High Cross, bearing censers, with which they censured the young king as he rode by. Other villages succeeded, and brought fresh crowds, fresh greetings, more priests, and more censuring. Fortunately, as we have already mentioned, the day was extremely fine, so the procession lost none of its effect.

Ere long, the ancient, and at that time most picturesque City of London came fully in view, protected by its grey walls, only to be entered through its gates, and remarkable for its many

churches, amidst which the lofty spire of old Saint Paul's was proudly conspicuous. Joyously were the bells ringing in all these churches; but deepest and loudest in tone, and plainly distinguished above the rest, were the great bells of the cathedral. Bombards, falconets, and sakers were likewise discharged from the City walls and gates. Greatly pleased by these sounds, the youthful monarch smiled graciously, as Sir Thomas Seymour told him it was evident that his loyal subjects, the good citizens of London, meant to give him a hearty welcome.

Crossing Finsbury fields, the cavalcade entered the City by Bishopsgate. There a short pause occurred, the young king being met by the lord mayor—hight Henry Hubblethorne—and the civic authorities, and being obliged to listen to an oration, to which he replied. Acclamations greeted him on all hands as he rode slowly through Bishopsgate-street Within, and blessings were showered upon his head. Not, perhaps, expecting

so much enthusiasm, or at all events unaccustomed to such a display of it towards himself, the young sovereign was much moved ; but he nevertheless acknowledged the hearty reception given him with infinite grace, bowing repeatedly right and left. His youth and gentle deportment won every heart, and all hoped that a prince so gracious and full of promise might meet with good counsellors. Time had not allowed much preparation to be made for the young king's passage through the City, but several of the houses were gaily hung with pieces of tapestry and cloths of gold and silver, while embroidered cushions were set in the windows, from which comely citizens' wives and their blooming daughters looked down upon the fair young king, and on his handsome uncle.

Near the church at the top of Gracechurch-street Edward was met by a solemn procession from Saint Paul's, consisting of a number of persons carrying silver crosses, the priests and choir of the cathedral in their vestments and robes, fol-

lowed by several of the City companies in their liveries.

As the royal cavalcade proceeded along Fenchurch-street, the popular enthusiasm increased, until the clamour became almost deafening, and the crowd pressed so much upon the young monarch, that it was with difficulty he could move on. However, the kindly tone in which he besought those nearest him to stand back, opened a way for him almost as readily as the halberds of the yeomen of the guard could clear it. The Earl of Hertford, who ever courted popular applause, smiled upon the crowd in vain. Attention was exclusively directed to the new king, and to the splendid-looking personage who immediately followed him ; and it would be difficult to say which of the two was most admired, though doubtless far the greater amount of interest attached to Edward. But Hertford had the mortification of finding himself completely overlooked

at a moment when he especially desired to be an object of attention.

Amid these manifestations of general enthusiasm and delight, which could not fail to be gratifying to him, Edward reached Tower Hill, where the populace was kept within due limits by a strong detachment of the mounted City guard. Here the ancient palace-fortress of his predecessors, wherein his august father had commenced his reign, and wherein he himself was about to keep his court for a while and hold his councils, burst upon his youthful gaze. No sooner was the young king discerned by those upon the watch for his coming, than from the summit of the White Tower burst forth a thundering welcome. The ordnance on the wharf before the fortress, on Traitors' Gate, on the By-ward Tower, on the barbican and the bastions, followed, and the roar was prolonged by the guns of the ships moored close at hand in the river.

"There spoke old *Harry Grace à Dieu*!" cried Seymour. "I know his tremendous tones well enough."

"'Tis the first time I have heard those guns," observed Edward. "In sooth, they have a terrible sound."

"Your enemies think so, sire," rejoined Sir Thomas, with a laugh. "Few who withstood the shot of those guns would care to hear them again. But you will have more of it presently. The cannoniers, I see, are once more ready on the White Tower. Heaven grant your highness be not deafened by the din!"

"Nay, I like it, gentle uncle," replied the young king, with boyish delight.

As he spoke, the ordnance from the Tower belched forth again; the roar being continued by the guns of the various ships, and closed by the deep-voiced cannon of the great *Harry*.

"'Tis a grand sound!" exclaimed Edward,

with a glowing countenance. "I should like to witness a siege, uncle."

"Perchance your highness may have your wish," replied Seymour. "The French are like to give us somewhat to do at Calais and Bouloign, ere long ; and if they fail, the Scots are certain to find us employment. Your grace must visit Berwick. But here comes the Constable of the Tower to conduct you to the fortress."

As the second roar of ordnance died away, Sir John Gage, mounted upon a powerful sorrel charger, very richly caparisoned, issued forth from the Bulwark Gate. He was closely followed by the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir John Markham, two esquires, likewise on horseback, and by a long train on foot, headed by the chaplain of the Tower in his surplice, attended by the verger bearing the cross, and consisting of the chief porter, the gentleman-gaoler, and other officers, with forty yeomen of the guard, armed with halberds, and clad in

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their scarlet liveries, with the Rose and Crown embroidered upon the back—the latter walking two and two.

When within a short distance of the youthful sovereign, Sir John dismounted, and committing his charger to an esquire, bent the knee before Edward, and welcomed him to the Tower. The Lieutenant followed the example of his superior, after which the chaplain pronounced a solemn benediction. This done, the Constable and Lieutenant remounted their steeds; the yeomen of the guard and the others wheeled round, and returned as they had come, while Sir John Gage preceded the young monarch to the fortress.

On the stone bridge, built across the moat between the barbican and the By-ward Tower, were collected all the illustrious persons constituting the upper and lower councils appointed by the late king's will, except such as were actually in attendance at the moment. Chief amongst them were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop

of Durham, and the Lord Chancellor; the two former being in full ecclesiastical costume, and the latter in his robes of office, with the collar of the Garter round his shoulders. Instead of sharing in the general animation, Wriothesley looked on with lowering brows, and to judge from the sternness of his visage and the coldness of his manner towards his companions, he meditated some hostile course against them. In the next rank were the Earl of Arundel, the venerable Lord Russell, the Earl of Essex, brother to Queen Catherine Parr, and the Lords St. John and Lisle. Most of these wore the Garter, and Lord Lisle was attired with extraordinary splendour. Behind them were the three judges in their robes, Montague, North, and Bromley. The rest of the brilliant assemblage consisted of Sir William Paget, chief secretary of state; Sir Anthony Denny and Sir William Herbert, chief gentlemen of the privy-chamber; the vice-chamberlain, the treasurer, and several others. Yeomen of the guard bearing halberds, trumpeters

sounding loud flourishes, bearers of standards, banners, and pennons, heralds in coats of arms, pursuivants of arms and marshals of arms with maces, came first, and the members of the council drew back on either side to allow them passage.

Next came the Constable of the Tower, compelling his charger to move backwards along the whole length of the bridge, until he brought him under the vaulted archway of the By-ward Tower, where horse and rider remained motionless as an equestrian statue. While this feat was performed with so much address that no disturbance was caused to the bystanders, amid loud cheers from the beholders gathered on the walls and towers of the fortress, the king rode upon the bridge, and had got about half way across it, when the lords of the council, headed by Cranmer, advanced to pay him homage. A short address, concluding with a benediction, was pronounced by the primate, during which all the others, except Tunstal, knelt down. The blessing over, the

kneeling lords arose, and exclaimed with one voice, "Vive le noble roi Edouard!" And the same cry was repeated with the utmost enthusiasm by Sir Thomas Seymour, who was close behind his royal nephew, by the Earl of Hertford, Sir Anthony Brown, and all upon the bridge.

Edward thanked them, in his clear musical voice, for these demonstrations of their loyalty and attachment. Then followed the ceremonial of the delivery of the keys of the Tower, which was thus accomplished. Attended by the chief porter bearing the keys on an embroidered cushion, the Constable of the Tower rode forth from beneath the gateway, and approached the king—the lords of the council drawing back on either side. The bearer of the keys then knelt down and proffered them to his majesty, who graciously thanked him, but desired they might remain in the custody of his right trusty and well-beloved cousin and councillor, Sir John Gage,

seeing they be in no better hands. Thereupon, the Constable bowed to the saddle-bow, and, without more ado, backed his charger through the Tower gates, which were flung wide open, and so into the lower ward; the lords of the council forming themselves into a procession, and following as Gage retreated, and the king and his retinue slowly advancing, amid the reiterated acclamations of the beholders, so that, after a while, all had entered the fortress.

A striking sight greeted the young monarch as he passed through the gates. From the Byward Tower to the Bloody Tower the whole of the lower ward was filled with archers and arquebusiers of the royal guard in their full accoutrements, drawn up in two lines—the archers on the right, and the arquebusiers on the left.

All these were picked men, of very tall stature, and their morions, breastplates, and tassettes were well burnished. Captains and other officers of the

guard, distinguishable from their splendid equipments, were stationed at intervals. The sight of these stalwart fellows, who had been his father's guard in ordinary, and had attended the late king to France, as Sir Thomas Seymour informed Edward, delighted the youthful sovereign. He had much military ardour in his composition, and might have displayed it in action, if circumstances had permitted. As it was, the veterans upon whom he now admiringly smiled as he rode past them, occasionally expressing a word of commendation that sank deep into the heart of him to whom it was addressed, predicted that he would become a hero.

Thus making his way, he passed through the gloomy gateway of the Bloody Tower, glancing at the iron teeth of the huge portcullis by which it was defended, and, mounting the hill, turned off on the right and entered a court, at that time existing between the White Tower and the palace,

and which was now densely filled by the various personages composing the procession. Here alighting, he was ceremoniously ushered into the palace.

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III.

HOW THE EARL OF HERTFORD WAS MADE LORD PROTECTOR OF
THE REALM, AND GOVERNOR OF THE KING'S PERSON DURING
HIS NONAGE.

SHORTLY after Edward's arrival at the Tower, and while the young monarch was preparing to receive all the lords, spiritual and temporal, who had flocked thither to swear allegiance to him, a conference took place in the lesser council-chamber of the White Tower (now used as a depository for state papers and records), to which none but members of the upper and lower councils were admitted. The lower council could not vote, but

they were allowed to assist at the deliberation. At the opening of the meeting, a resolution was moved by the Lord Chancellor, who had his own motives for making the proposition, that they should all solemnly swear to maintain inviolate every part and article of the last will and testament of their late sovereign lord and master. This motion, though displeasing to some, could not be opposed, and the oath was administered accordingly.

"The oath has been taken," muttered Wriothesley, glancing at Hertford. "We shall now see who will attempt to break it."

He had not to wait long, for Sir William Paget, chief secretary of state, and Hertford's principal associate, rose from his seat, and craving their attention, said:

"Before we proceed further, my lords and gentlemen, I may remark that it will be highly embarrassing to the people, and especially to foreign ambassadors, if they are compelled to address themselves on every occasion to sixteen persons, all of

them clothed with the same authority. I therefore propose to you, as a preliminary measure, that we select from our number the worthiest and fittest amongst us to be chief and president, conferring upon him the title of Lord Protector of the Realm. By such means there will be infinitely speedier despatch of business, while no change whatever can take place in the established form of government, inasmuch as an express condition shall be annexed to the dignity, that the Lord Protector shall do no act without the concurrence of the entire body of the council."

"Your motion cannot be entertained, good master secretary," cried the Lord Chancellor, rising, and speaking with much warmth. "It is in direct contradiction of the late king's will, which you have just sworn to uphold, and which you cannot infringe in any particular without unfaithfulness to your trust. We will have no chief, president, or Lord Protector. No such appointment was contemplated by our late royal master. I

defy you to show it. Equal authority was given by him to us all, and I refuse to transfer any portion of mine to another executor, be he whom he may." And he glanced menacingly at Hertford, who, however, seemed perfectly easy as to the result.

"But if our choice should fall on you, my lord, would your objections to the step be equally strong?" said Sir Richard Rich, another of Hertford's partisans, rising.

"Ay, marry would they!" rejoined Wriothesley. "I wot well you have no thought of choosing me, Sir Richard; but if you had, you could not lawfully do it, neither would I accept the office of Lord Protector if offered me, knowing it to be contrary to the intentions of our late sovereign lord and master that any one of us should have higher power than his fellows. You must take the will as it is—not as you would have it."

"Far be it from me to propose aught contrary to the true intent and meaning of our lamented

master's testamentary injunctions," said Paget; "but despatch of business and the convenience of the government generally, require that we should have a head. Otherwise, there will be nothing but perplexity and confusion. Moreover, since the Lord Protector will in reality have no power except such as is derived from us all, I can see no harm in the appointment—but much good. I therefore claim your voices for his majesty's elder uncle, the Earl of Hertford, whom I look upon as the fittest person to be our chief. If you consult your own dignity, you will grace him with the title of Lord Protector, and as he is nearest in relationship to the king that now is, and must have his majesty's interest at heart more than any other, you cannot do better than appoint him governor of the king's person during his nonage."

"It cannot be done, I say," cried Wriothesley, stamping furiously on the ground. "I will never agree to it—and, at least, the election must be unanimous."

"Not so, my lord. A plurality of voices will suffice," rejoined Paget.

"Be calm, I entreat you, my lord," said Sir Anthony Brown, in a low voice, to the Lord Chancellor. "Your opposition will avail nothing, but your adhesion will make you Earl of Southampton."

"Ha ! say you so?" exclaimed Wriothesley, becoming suddenly appeased, and sitting down.

"Proceed without fear," whispered Sir Anthony to Paget. "I have stopped the Lord Chancellor's mouth with an earldom."

"It is well," returned the other, in the same tone. Then looking round the assemblage, he added, "If I understand aright, my lords and gentlemen, you all agree with me that it is meet my Lord of Hertford be appointed President of the Council, with the title of Lord Protector of the Realm, and Governor of the King's Person during his minority. Be pleased to signify your assent by your voices."

"Hold yet a moment!" interposed the Lord

Chancellor, again rising. "Couple with your proposal the condition that the Lord Protector shall do nothing save with the assent of all the other councillors. On that understanding I am content to withdraw my opposition."

"It is distinctly so understood, my lord, and I thank you for your adhesion," replied Paget, bowing. "Are all the rest agreed?" he added.

Upon which, the others arose, exclaiming with one accord, "that no one was so fit to be Lord Protector as the Earl of Hertford, and that they were well content with the appointment."

"I meddle not with secular matters," observed Cranmer, "for the conduct whereof I am little fitted. But feeling well assured that the affairs of the government will be managed with wisdom and ability by my Lord of Hertford; and feeling also certain that no efforts on his part will be spared to purge and purify the Church, and establish the pure doctrines of Christianity, I have given my voice for him."

"I have concurred in my Lord of Hertford's appointment," said Tunstal, "in the belief that it is essential there should be a head to the government; and in the firm belief also that no better person than his lordship can be found for the office. But still adhering, as I do, to the old religion, though I have been content, for the sake of peace, to conform to many changes wrought in it by our late sovereign lord and master, I am strongly averse to any further Reformation, as it is called, and I shall deeply regret the vote I have given if I find the Lord Protector take advantage of the power just conferred upon him to push for further separation from the See of Rome, and to widen and deepen the breaches already unhappily made in the Church."

"No fear of that, my lord of Durham," said Wriothesley; "the cause of Rome is too ably supported in the upper council by yourself, by my lords of Arundel and St. John, by Sir Edward Wotton, Sir Anthony Brown, and Doctor Nicholas

Wotton; and in the lower council by Sir John Gage, Sir William Petre, Sir John Baker, and Sir Thomas Cheyney. I say nothing of myself—but you may count on all my zeal. We will resist—strenuously resist—any further interference with our religion.”

“You have spoken our sentiments, my lord,” said Sir Anthony Brown, and other friends of the old belief. “We are disposed to make up the breach with the See of Rome, not to widen it.”

“Nay, my good lords and gentlemen, let there be no disagreement amongst us,” said Hertford, in a bland and conciliatory voice. Then bowing around, he added, “Accept, I pray you all, my hearty thanks for the high and important offices just conferred upon me. My best endeavours shall be used to satisfy you all. I shall strive to reconcile differences, not to heighten them; I shall be moderate and tolerant, rather than over-zealous; and I cannot far err, seeing I must be guided and controlled by your collective opinions and

wisdom." This speech producing the effect desired by the new Lord Protector, he went on. "And now, my lords and gentlemen, there is a matter wherein many of ye are concerned to which I would direct your present attention, though the full accomplishment thereof must necessarily be deferred to another time. As you are all doubtless aware, there is a clause in the late king's will requiring us, his executors, to make good all his promises of any sort or kind. What these promises were it will be needful to ascertain without delay. As a means thereto, I will call upon one who, being greatly trusted, had the best opportunities of knowing his majesty's intentions, to declare. I address myself to you, Sir William Paget, and require you to state explicitly as much as you know of the late king's designs."

"I can answer your inquiries without difficulty, my lord," replied the chief secretary, "for I have a book wherein the king's wishes were set down by myself, under his majesty's direction, by whom,

as ye will see, the memoranda are signed. Here it is," he added, exhibiting the book. "From this ye will learn the honours and rewards meant to be conferred by him upon his faithful servants. Herein ye will find it written, that the Earl of Hertford shall be created Lord High Treasurer and Earl Marshal, with the title of Duke of Somerset, and his son Earl of Hertford; in support of which titles, yearly revenues are to arise to the duke and his son out of the next bishop's land that shall fall due."

"That may be Durham," observed Tunstal. "His majesty hath shown as little scruple towards us of the superior clergy, as he did towards the monasteries."

"Nay, I trust my revenues will not arise from your diocese, my lord," said Hertford, "though it be the richest and most considerable in the kingdom. What more, good master secretary?"

"The Earl of Essex is set down to be Marquis of Northampton," pursued Paget; "the Lord Lisle

to be Earl of Warwick; the Lord Wriothesley"—and he paused to glance at the Lord Chancellor—"to be Earl of Southampton; Sir Richard Rich to be Baron Rich; and Sir Thomas Seymour to be Baron Seymour of Sudley, and Lord High Admiral of England."

The latter announcement was received with considerable applause, especially from those of the lower council, and the subject of it was warmly congratulated by his companions. Seymour, however, looked discontented, and evidently thought he had been inadequately rewarded. One person only in the upper council took umbrage at the appointment. This was the existing Lord High Admiral, Lord Lisle.

"How is this?" he cried, angrily. "Am I to be deprived of my office?"

"Only to have something better," replied the Lord Protector. "Resign your patent in my brother's favour, and I will indemnify you with

the post of Grand Chamberlain, which I now hold."

"I am quite content with the exchange, my lord," replied Lisle, his angry looks giving way to smiles.

"What of Sir John Gage?" demanded the Lord Protector. "Is not he to be exalted?"

"No mention is made of him," replied Paget, shaking his head.

"I rejoice to hear it," resounded the deep voice of the Constable of the Tower, from the lower part of the chamber.

"Is there no title bestowed on yourself, good master secretary?" inquired the Lord Protector.

"Your lordship will see when you look over the book," replied Paget.

"Being in waiting when these memoranda were made," observed Sir Anthony Denny, "I told his majesty that master secretary remembered all but

himself; whereupon the king desired me to write him down for a yearly revenue, as appeareth in the book."

"Revenues were granted to all whom the king designed to honour," said Paget, "and were destined to spring from the forfeit estates of the Duke of Norfolk; but this plan has been defeated by the duke, who, as ye know, prevailed upon his majesty to settle the estates on his son, our present sovereign. Consequently, the revenues must be derived from other sources."

"All shall be ordered in due time," rejoined the Lord Protector. "After the coronation of his present majesty, all the creations appointed by the late king shall be made. Until then, those who are most interested must be content to wait. And now, my lords and gentlemen, let us to the king, who by this time must have entered the presence-chamber. I pray your grace to come with me."

This he addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, however, held back to let him pass forth first. The rest of the council, of both degrees, followed them out of the chamber.

IV.

HOW THE YOUTHFUL KING WAS KNIGHTED BY THE LORD
PROTECTOR; AND HOW THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON WAS
KNIGHTED BY THE KING.

YOUNG Edward's first reception was held in the council-chamber of the White Tower—a vast apartment still existing, and which, if its height were only proportionate to its length and width, would almost be without equal. As it is, the chamber is very noble, with a massive timber roof, flat, and of immense weight, supported by double ranges of stout oak pillars. Around this chamber run narrow stone galleries, arched and vaulted,

constructed within the thickness of the walls, and having large semicircular openings for the admission of light.

Fitted up as it was for the grand ceremonial about to take place within it, the presence-chamber, for so it was then styled, looked really magnificent; neither was it at all too large for the accommodation of the numerous ecclesiastics of the highest order, nobles, knights, City authorities—the lord mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs to wit—pensioners, esquires, henchmen, pages, yeomen of the guard, marshals of arms, pursuivants, trumpeters, and others, by whom it was thronged. So overcrowded was it, in fact, that the stone galleries previously mentioned were filled.

The walls were hung with costly tapestry, and the pillars garnished with cloth of gold, the sides of the chamber and the roof being thickly set with banners of arms and descents, together with bannerols of the king's dominions, while the floor was deeply strewn with rushes.

At the upper end there was a cloth of estate, beneath which, upon a dais with three steps, sat the youthful monarch; a wide open space, covered with a carpet, being kept in front of the throne by silken cords drawn from side to side, at the entrance to which space stood the vice-chamberlain and other court officials, while the exit was guarded by gentlemen ushers.

Within these privileged precincts only two persons had as yet been admitted—the Archbishop of Canterbury and the newly-made Lord Protector. In his quality of grand chamberlain, Hertford stood on the right of the king, bearing the wand of office, while the primate occupied a place on the left.

It was a moment of intense excitement to the young king, whose breast was filled with emotions such as he had never before experienced; but though much agitated internally, he maintained an outward appearance of composure, and performed the new and difficult part he was re-

quired to enact in a manner that won him universal admiration. Once or twice he glanced at his uncle, the Lord Protector, somewhat timidly, wishing Sir Thomas Seymour were in his place, but Hertford's bland and courtier-like manner quickly reassured him. Edward's face was flushed, and his eyes unusually brilliant, for his pulse beat fast; and though his deportment might want the majesty that years alone can impart, it had something infinitely more charming in the almost child-like grace of the young monarch, and in the sweetness and simplicity of his looks.

The queen-dowager, who, surrounded by her ladies of honour—the Marchioness of Dorset, the Countess of Hertford, Lady Herbert, Lady Tyrwhitt, and others—sat beneath a lesser canopy on the right side of the room, regarded him with almost maternal pride and affection. The widowed queen had been summoned from the privacy to which she had retired on the demise of her royal husband, and was now lodged within the Tower.

All needful preliminaries having been gone through, the whole of the council, headed by the Lord Chancellor, entered the reserved space, and passing one by one before Edward, who arose to receive them, knelt down, kissed the youthful sovereign's hand, and vowed allegiance to him. Such a ceremony must be always interesting, but it was never, perhaps, more interesting than on the present occasion, when the extreme youth and beauty of the monarch lent it a peculiar charm.

As Sir Thomas Seymour approached, Edward, who had not hitherto spoken, observed, with a smile,

"You have already vowed fidelity to me, gentle uncle."

"Gramercy for the reminder, my gracious liege," replied Seymour. "Yet shall not that vow, which I will most religiously keep, prevent me from taking the oath of allegiance from subject to sovereign." And kneeling down, he went

through the ceremony like the others, but with even more fervour.

The whole of the council having thus sworn fidelity to the king, the Lord Chancellor advanced, and making a profound obeisance to Edward, informed him, in a voice distinctly audible throughout the whole of the vast and crowded chamber, that they had unanimously elected the Earl of Hertford to be Lord Protector.

"You have done well," replied Edward. "I approve the council's choice. But you have more to say. Proceed, my lord."

"Considering the tender years of your highness," rejoined Wriothesley, "we have deemed it expedient to appoint a governor of your royal person during your nonage."

"I am right glad of it," said Edward, fixing his eye upon Sir Thomas Seymour. "And you have chosen——"

"As your majesty will naturally anticipate, we

have chosen the Earl of Hertford for your governor," replied Wriothesley.

"How?" exclaimed Edward, unable to conceal his disappointment. "Marry, this is not what I expected!"

"Does not our choice give your highness satisfaction?" inquired the Lord Chancellor, with secret malice. "The Earl of Hertford is your uncle."

"But I have another uncle," cried Edward, with much vivacity. "Marry, you should have chosen him."

"By my life, the boy is his father's true son," whispered Sir John Gage to Seymour; "he *will* have you for governor."

"He will, if they will let him have his way," replied Sir Thomas, doubtfully.

"And he will have it, if he holds firm," rejoined the Constable.

Several of the upper council had exchanged looks at the vivacious expression of the young king's sentiments and inclinations, and seemed

shaken in their resolve. Seymour began to think his grand point was gained. The Lord Protector looked uneasy, but Cranmer came to the rescue.

"I can easily understand your highness's preference of your younger uncle," observed the primate to the young king; "but age, experience, and I may add high station, render the Earl of Hertford the more suitable of the two to be your governor."

"The last defect might be easily amended, your grace," rejoined Edward, in a tone of pique, "though I cannot so readily give my uncle Sir Thomas my lord of Hertford's years and experience. But be it as ye will. Ye are the best judges of what is fittest for me. I heartily thank your grace and the lords and gentlemen of the council for the care taken of me."

Thus were Seymour's hopes rudely dashed to the ground. But he was somewhat cheered by a significant look directed towards him by his royal

nephew—a look that did not escape the vigilance of the Lord Protector.

“If I cannot be governor of his person, at all events I shall have unlimited influence over him in secret,” mentally ejaculated Seymour.

Their business over, the Lord Chancellor and the rest of the council retired. They were succeeded by the lords spiritual, headed by Gardiner, who, as chief prelate, walked first. Tunstal having departed with the council, the Bishop of Winchester was followed by Doctor Bonner, Bishop of London, and the long list of church dignitaries was closed by Doctor Bush, Bishop of Bristol.

Then came the lords temporal, foremost of whom was the Marquis of Dorset. The Earls of Oxford, Shrewsbury, Derby, and Sussex, succeeded. Each noble as he arose from paying homage, exclaimed with a loud and earnest voice, “God save your grace!” Then came Lord Morley, Lord Dacre of the North, and the Lords Ferrers, Clinton, Gray, and Scrope. These were

succeeded by the Lords Abergavenny, Conyers, Latimer, Fitzwalter, and Bray, with a multitude of others whom it would be tedious to particularise; neither can we call over the long roll of knights and esquires who subsequently vowed allegiance to their youthful sovereign.

Suffice it to mention that among those who thus swore fidelity to the new king were the Lord Mayor of London, and the aldermen and sheriffs in their scarlet robes.

It was while the civic authorities were yet in Edward's presence, that he prayed them to tarry a moment, and, descending from the throne, besought his elder uncle to knight him.

Whereupon, the Lord Protector immediately drew his sword and dubbed the king; after which, the youthful monarch took his uncle's sword, and, commanding the lord mayor to kneel, struck him on the shoulder with the blade with right good will, bidding him arise Sir Henry Hubblethorne.

Being a very portly personage, the lord mayor

had much ado to get up again, but, having accomplished the feat, with considerable embarrassment he proffered his thanks to the youthful king, who could scarce forbear from laughing at his confusion.

Then the young monarch again gracefully ascended the throne. As soon as he faced the assemblage, they all cried out together, "God save the noble King Edward!"

The trumpets were then sounded.

Then the young king took off his cap with much majesty of action, and stood erect before them all.

Silence immediately ensued—a tag might have been heard to fall. Amidst this deep hush, in tones that vibrated through every breast, and stirred up the strongest feelings of loyalty and devotion, the young king said:

"We heartily thank you, my lords all. Hereafter, in all that ye shall have to do with us for any suit or causes, ye shall be heartily welcome."



The Meeting between King Edward and the Lady Jane Gray
in the Tower Garden.

Once more the trumpets were sounded. Cannon replied from without. And so the ceremony ended.


A grand banquet followed, at which all the lords assisted—the queen-dowager sitting on the king's right, and the Lord Protector on the left.

That night, and for some time afterwards, the whole of the council, upper and lower, with many of the nobles and knights and their attendants, were lodged within the Tower.

V.

HOW KING EDWARD VI. WENT FORTH BETIMES INTO THE PRIVY GARDEN OF THE TOWER.—HOW HE THERE ENCOUNTERED THE YOUTHFUL LADY JANE GREY, AND OF THE PROFITABLE DISCOURSE THAT ENSUED BETWEEN THEM.

DURING the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., the Tower had been little more than a strongly-fortified, well-garrisoned state prison. Its dungeons were crowded with sufferers from the terrible statute of the "Six Articles," and with important state-delinquents; but the grand apartments of the palace were closed, and the council-chambers in the White Tower but rarely visited. Never, indeed, since



the luckless Catherine Howard was brought to the block, had the ruthless monarch set foot within the fortress. Well might he avoid the Tower, for its very stones would have cried out against him! He could not have passed over the open space in front of Saint Peter's Chapel, and have marked that blood-sprinkled spot, where, according to tradition, no grass will grow, without thinking of the two lovely women who had there been put to death, after vainly suing to him for mercy. He could not have looked around at the various towers girding the inner ward, without recalling the hundreds whom he had there immured. To him the Tower must have been full of dreadful memories—memories of the noble, the wise, the good, the beautiful and once-beloved, whom he had held in durance in its cells, or delivered over to the headsman. If all those who had perished by his decrees, by the axe, or at the stake, could have been collected together on Tower-green, they would well-nigh have filled

that spacious area. No wonder Henry, proof as he was against remorse, should shun the scene of his atrocities.

But the gloom that had so long hung over the bloodstained fortress, making it an object of dread to all who gazed upon it, was now for a time dispelled. Sounds of revelry and rejoicing, as we have shown, were once more heard within its courts. All the state apartments in the palace—a structure that, unfortunately for the lover of antiquity, has totally disappeared—were decorated anew, and thrown open. The court was now held at the Tower, and such was the throng of visitants brought thither by the circumstance, that every available chamber in the fortress had an occupant, and many chambers—and these none of the largest—had several.

But not only were there more guests within the palace and in the different lodgings connected with it, but the military force ordinarily maintained within the Tower was trebled. These

precautions were taken for the security of the young king's person. Not that any rising on the part of the citizens was apprehended; but such was the course usually adopted at that time on the accession of a monarch to the throne. Thus, in addition to the nobles and their retinues, the Tower was so crowded with archers and arquebusiers that it was wonderful where so many persons could be bestowed. The bastions bristled with cannon, and the ramparts were thronged with men-at-arms. Yeomen of the guard paraded within the outer ward, while troops of henchmen, sergeants of office, clerks of the king's house, marshals of the hall, ushers and sewers of the hall and chamber, minstrels, and serving-men, in rich and varied liveries, were collected in the courts of the palace, or at various points of the wide inner ward. Within and without, all was stir and animation. And if the hapless prisoners still languishing in the dungeons did not share in the general rejoicing, they did not interfere with it, since

none save the gaolers troubled themselves about them.

Early on the morning after Edward's arrival at the Tower, while the extraordinary bustle just described prevailed throughout the fortress, the object of all this unwonted stir was walking, almost alone, in the privy garden attached to the palace. Garden and palace have long since disappeared, but at that time the former occupied a large triangular space between the Lanthorn Tower, the Salt Tower, and the Well Tower, and being enclosed by the high ballium wall, had a very secluded air. It was pleasantly laid out with parterres, walks, a clipped yew-tree alley, and a fountain, and boasted two or three fine elms, and an ancient mulberry-tree. But it must be recollected that it was now winter, and consequently the place was not seen to advantage: the trees were leafless, the water in the fountain congealed, the clipped alley covered with hoar-frost. Whenever the Tower was used as a royal residence, the

privy garden was reserved exclusively for the king. Edward, therefore, had no reason to apprehend intrusion while taking exercise within it.

Notwithstanding the fatigue and excitement of the previous day, Edward quitted his couch long before it became light, and having finished his devotions, and heard a homily from his chaplain, which occupied some time, he repaired by a private passage, and attended by a single gentleman of the chamber, to the palace garden, where he supposed he should be undisturbed. The diligent young monarch, who never wasted a moment, did not seek this quiet retreat merely for the purpose of exercise, but, while walking to and fro, employed his time in studying the Institutes of Justinian, while another ponderous tome, namely, the venerable Bracton's treatise "*De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliæ*," was borne by his attendant for occasional consultation. Wrapped in a velvet gown, lined and bordered with sable, Edward did not seem to feel the cold half so much as

his attendant, but continued to pore upon his book as unconcernedly as if it had been a morning in June, sometimes moving very slowly, and occasionally coming to a stand-still, if a passage perplexed him.

The person with him, whom he addressed as John Fowler, had nothing very noticeable in his appearance. He was short and stout, by no means ill-favoured, and wore a reddish sugar-loaf beard. Fond of good cheer, he had usually a ruddy, jovial look, and a droll, good-humoured expression of countenance; but his face was now pinched with cold, and his nose, large, knobbed, and mulberry-coloured, was literally blue with cold, and he had much ado to prevent his teeth from chattering. He did not dare to utter a complaint, and, as a matter of course, was obliged to stop whenever his royal master stopped, and keep up his circulation in the best way he could. While Edward was buried in Justinian, how Master Fowler longed to be back at the great fire in the


hall, heaped up with logs, which he had so recently quitted! how he promised to solace himself for his present suffering by a deep draught of mulled sack, and a plentiful breakfast on pork-chine, roast capon, and baked red-deer! Fowler had occupied the post he now filled during the late king's lifetime. Much trusted by the Lord Protector, he was placed near Edward in order that all the young king's doings might be reported to his uncle. Whether Fowler merited the confidence reposed in him by his employer will be seen hereafter.

Nearly an hour passed by in this manner, and all the creature-comforts so anxiously looked forward to by the half-frozen gentleman of the privy chamber seemed as far distant as ever. The young king still continued occupied with Justinian, and showed no signs of returning to the palace. He had come to a stand, and was conning over a passage of unusual perplexity, when another person entered the garden. This was a young girl of

extraordinary beauty, wrapped like the king in a furred mantle to defend her tender person from the severity of the weather, and, like him, provided with a book, on which her eyes were studiously fixed—so studiously, indeed, that she did not appear to observe the young monarch and his attendant. On his part, also, Edward was equally unconscious of her approach, and never once raised his eyes to look at her.

It was the duty of the gentleman of the chamber to warn the fair intruder from the royal presence; but either he was too cold to discharge his office properly, or curious to see what would happen, for he contented himself with coughing slightly, and failing to arouse the king's attention, he took no other means of checking her advance.

By this time the fair young creature was within a short distance of Edward, who, hearing footsteps, lifted his eyes from his book, and regarded her with some astonishment, but with anything rather than displeasure.



At the same moment the young maiden looked up, exhibiting a countenance of wondrous loveliness. A slight blush suffused her features, and heightened, if possible, their beauty. She might have been a year older than the king—at all events, she was the taller of the two. Her high birth was proclaimed in her lineaments, in her carriage—which had a most charming dignity about it—and in her attire, which was such as became the daughter of one of the most powerful nobles of the land. Serene and gentle in expression, full of thought, and apparently free from any taint of humanity, her physiognomy presented that rare union of intelligence and beauty, which, when seen in perfection, as in the present instance, seems to raise its possessor to a level with beings of a higher and purer order than those of earth. Her look and smile were little less than seraphic. Such was the youthful Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Marquis of Dorset, great-niece of Henry VIII., and grand

daughter of his beautiful sister Mary, wedded first to Louis XII. of France, and secondly to the illustrious Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.

"Good morrow, sweet cousin," said the youthful king, graciously returning Jane's lowly obeisance. "Marry, you are early astir. I should have thought, that on a frosty morn like this, a seat by the warm hearth would have been fitter for one so delicate as yourself than exposure to the keen air. But you seem to bear the cold bravely."

"I do not feel it," replied the young Lady Jane; "I am accustomed to exposure to all weathers, and take no hurt from it. Your majesty is mistaken in supposing that I am at all delicate. I am far hardier than the slightness of my frame would seem to warrant. When I am at Bradgate, in Leicestershire, I ride to the chase with my father, and am never wearied by a long day's sport. Sport did I call it?" she added, with a half-sigh—"hunting the deer is no pastime to me; but such it is generally considered, and so I must

perforce style it. Then I rise betimes, for I am no lag-a-bed, and take my book, and stroll forth into the park, if it be summer, or into the garden if winter, and read and meditate till summoned to my slender repast."

"Much the same mode of life as I have passed myself," replied Edward, "though I have never yet had my fill of the chase. Now I am king I mean to gratify my inclinations, and kill plenty of deer in Windsor Forest and in Enfield Chase. But if you like not hunting, sweet coz, surely you must be fond of hawking? 'Tis a noble pastime!"

"May be so," rejoined Jane, gravely, "but I like it no better than hunting; and I like coursing with greyhounds less than hawking, and angling less than coursing. Your majesty will smile when I tell you that I deem all these sports cruel. They yield me no delight. I cannot bear to have harmless creatures tortured to make sport for me. It sickens me to see a noble hart pulled down, and I

have rescued more than one poor crying hare from the very jaws of its pursuers. Poor beasts, I pity them. I pity even the mischievous otter."

"I do not share your sentiments, Jane," said the king; "but I admire them, as they show the tenderness of your disposition. For my own part, while hunting or hawking, I become so excited that I feel little for beast or bird. I have small liking for angling, I must needs confess, for that sport does not excite me, but I read by the riverside while my preceptors ply the rod and line. But, as I just now said, I will have a grand chase in Windsor Forest, which my uncle, Sir Thomas Seymour, shall conduct; and you shall come and see it, if you list, sweet cousin."

"I pray your majesty to hold me excused," replied Jane. "I have more hunting than I care for at Bradgate. But I should delight in roaming through Windsor Forest, which, they tell me, is a right noble wood."

"Have you not seen it?" cried Edward.

"Nay, then, there is a great pleasure in store for you, sweet coz. Marry, there are no such groves and glades at Bradgate as you shall find there."

"That I can readily believe," rejoined Jane; "and the castle itself hath much interest to me."

"I shall not visit it until after a sad ceremony hath taken place in Saint George's Chapel," observed Edward, with much emotion, "and the king, my lamented father—on whose soul may Jesu have mercy!—hath been placed by the side of my sainted mother in its vaults. But when this season of gloom is passed, when I have been crowned at Westminster, when the Lord Protector and the council will let me remove my court to Windsor, then, sweet cousin, you must come to the castle. Marry, it will content you. 'Tis far better worth seeing than this grim old Tower, which looks more like a dungeon than a palace."

"Nay, my liege," replied Jane, "Windsor Castle, however grand and regal it may be, can

never interest me more than this stern-looking fortress. Within these walls what tragedies have been enacted! what terrible occurrences have taken place! It must be peopled by phantoms. But I will not dwell longer on this theme, and I pray you pardon the allusion. Strange to say, ever since I set foot within the Tower, I have been haunted with the notion, which I cannot shake off, that I myself shall, one day, be a prisoner in its cells, and lose my life on its green."

"That day will not occur in my time, sweet cousin," replied Edward. "It is not a place to inspire lively thoughts or pleasant dreams, and I must needs own that I slept ill myself last night. I dreamed of the two children of my namesake, Edward V., and their murder in the Bloody Tower. I hope you had no such dreams, Jane?"

"Indeed, my liege, I had—dreams more terrible, perchance, than your own," she rejoined. "You will guess what I dreamed about when I tell you that, on awaking, I was rejoiced to find

my head still on my shoulders. Hath your grace any faith in omens?"

"Not much," answered Edward. "But why do you ask, sweet coz?"

"Your majesty shall hear," she returned. "When I entered the Tower yesterday with the noble lord my father, and your grace's loving cousin my mother, we crossed the inner ward on our way to the palace, and amongst the crowd assembled on the green I noticed a singularly ill-favoured personage, whose features and figure attracted my attention. The man limped in his gait, and was clad in blood-red serge, over which he wore a leathern jerkin. Black elf-locks hung on either side of his cadaverous visage, and there was something wolfish and bloodthirsty in his looks. On seeing me notice him, the man doffed his cap, and advanced towards me, but my father angrily ordered him back, and struck him with his horsewhip. The man limped off, glaring malignantly at me with his red, wolfish eyes, and my

father then told me it was Manger, the headsmen, and, as it was deemed unlucky to encounter him, he had driven him away. Doth not your majesty think that the meeting with such a man, on such a spot, was an ill omen?"

"Heaven avert it!" exclaimed the young king. "But let us change the topic. Tell me the subject of your studies, my learned cousin?"

"I can lay no claim to the epithet your majesty hath bestowed upon me," she replied. "But the book I am reading is Martin Bucer's 'Commentary on the Gospels.'"

"I have heard of it from my tutor, Doctor Cox, who describes it as an admirable treatise. You shall expound it to me, Jane. Doubtless you have read Bucer's 'Commentary on the Psalms?'"

"I have, my liege, and I will essay to expound that work to you, as also the 'Pirskoavol' of Paul Fagius, which I have been lately reading, if you be so minded."

"You could not please me better. I am certain

to derive profit and instruction from your comments, Jane. The preparation is needful, for it is my purpose to invite Bucer and Fagius to England. His grace of Canterbury hath already spoken to me concerning them. It shall be my aim to make my court the resort of learned and pious men, and, above all, of such as are most zealous for the reform of the Church, and its complete purification from the errors of popery."

"Bucer and Fagius are both men of great learning and piety, sound and severe controversialists, able and ready to refute and assail, if need be, the adversaries of the good cause, and I am rejoiced that your grace intends to invite them to your court. You will do yourself honour thereby. But there is another person, not unknown to your highness, whom I think might be of service in carrying out the mighty work of the Reformation which you project. I mean the Princess Elizabeth's instructor, worthy Master Roger Ascham."

"I have not overlooked him," replied Edward.

"Ascham merits promotion, and he shall have it. A man must needs be master of Greek to fill a professor's chair in St. John's College, Cambridge, as Ascham hath filled it, and his knowledge of divinity is equal, I am told, to his scholarship. My wise and well-beloved father chose him from his acquirements to be Elizabeth's instructor—she is now reading Sophocles and Cicero with him—and when his task with her is finished, as it must be ere long, for she is a quick and willing scholar—I will have him near me."

"Your grace will do well," rejoined Jane. "Roger Ascham ought to be one of the luminaries of our age; and, above all, he is a godly man, and without guile. His latinity is remarkably pure."

"It must be so, if you commend it, my learned cousin," remarked the king, "for you are a very competent judge. Both Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox lauded your Latin letters to me, and

said they were written with classic elegance and purity."

"Your grace will make me vain," rejoined Jane, slightly colouring; "but I am bound to state that my own worthy tutor, Master Elmer, made the same remarks upon the letters with which you have honoured me. Talking of my correspondents—if I may venture to speak of any other in the same breath as your majesty—I am reminded that there is another person worthy of your attention, inasmuch as he would be a humble but zealous co-operator in your great design. The person I refer to is Henri Bullinger, disciple and successor of Zwinglius, and at this present a pastor at Zurich. Bullinger hath suffered much persecution, and would endure yet more if needful."


"Bullinger is an ardent Reformer," observed Edward. "He assisted, I remember, at the famous conference at Berne. You shall tell me more about him on some other occasion, and if you will favour

me with a sight of his letters to you I shall be well pleased. Meanwhile, you may rest satisfied that he shall not be forgotten. You are a very zealous advocate for the Reformed faith yourself, cousin Jane."

"I have that in me which would enable me to die for the religion I profess, sire," she cried, looking upwards.

"I do not doubt your constancy, sweet cousin, but I trust it will never be put to the proof," said the young king, approvingly. "I came out to study Justinian and Bracton, but you have given me a far better lesson than any law-maker could afford. You must come often to our court, Jane, whether we be at Westminster, Shene, or Windsor."

"It will gladden me to comply with your majesty's injunctions, if I have my father's permission," she replied; "but he will probably think me much too young to appear at court. I have



lived almost wholly in retirement hitherto, my education being far from complete."

"But if I command, my lord of Dorset must obey; and so must you, fair cousin," cried Edward, with a slight touch of his father's imperious manner.

"Your grace will command nothing that a loyal subject cannot comply with—of that I am certain," rejoined Jane. "But your majesty seems to forget that you have a governor—and a strict one, if what I hear be true. Are you quite sure that the Lord Protector will allow you to choose your own companions?"

"Peradventure not, unless they are agreeable to him," returned Edward; "but he cannot object to you, fair cousin, or to my sister Elizabeth. I will not ask him to let my sister Mary come often to me, unless she will abjure her errors, and conform to the new doctrines."

"Gentle persuasion may lead the Lady Mary's

grace into the right path," said Jane. "No pains should be spared with one so richly endowed. Such a convert would be worthy of your majesty, and redound greatly to your honour."

"I despair of making a convert of Mary," replied Edward. "So stiff-necked and bigoted is she, that even the strong-willed king my father had enough to do to bring her to submission; and for a time she set his rightful authority at defiance. His grace of Canterbury will advise me as to the course that ought to be pursued with her, and I shall be guided by his counsel.—Know you my younger uncle, Sir Thomas Seymour, Jane?"

"But little," she answered. "I have seen him with my father, and I could not fail to notice him yesterday, for by common assent he was judged the noblest-looking personage who vowed fealty to you. Now I bethink me, her highness the queen-dowager called my attention to him, and asked me what I thought of him. I told her I

deemed him wondrous handsome, whereat she smiled very graciously upon me."

"He *is* wondrous handsome!" cried Edward, enthusiastically; "and I marvel not her majesty should smile to hear him praised, for he is a favourite with her, as, indeed, he is with my sister Elizabeth, and with most people, except the Lord Protector. To speak plain—for I dare speak plain to you, sweet cousin—I think the Lord Protector is jealous of him, and of his fancied influence over me. I would Sir Thomas Seymour had been chosen my governor. My elder uncle is good and kind, but he is austere, and—not exactly like Sir Thomas. He will keep all the power in his own hands, and leave little more than the name to me."

"Perhaps it is for the best. Your grace is very young, and can have had but slight experience of state affairs."

"But I shall not like the Lord Protector's control," cried Edward. "I feel impatient already

though he has scarcely begun to exercise it. But I *could* obey Sir Thomas without a murmur."

"I begin to perceive that Sir Thomas's influence over your majesty is by no means imaginary, and that the Lord Protector may have good cause for jealousy of his younger brother," observed Jane, smiling. "But I must crave your majesty's permission to retire. I have sufficiently interrupted your studies already, and will not trespass further on your valuable time."

"Nay, I hold your discourse to be more profitable than my studies, as I just now told you, fair coz," rejoined the youthful king. "I shall read no more now. Do not burden yourself longer with that book, but let Fowler carry it for you."

And as at a sign from his majesty the gentleman in attendance respectfully advanced to take the books from his royal master and the Lady Jane, Edward observed that he looked very cold.

"I am well-nigh starved, an please your ma-

jesty," replied Fowler. "I have no inward fire, like your highness and the Lady Jane Grey, to warm me withal."

"What inward fire dost thou speak of, Fowler?" demanded the king, smiling.

"The fire of intellect, an please your majesty," replied the other, "which burns so brightly in your grace and my Lady Jane, that you have no need of any grosser element to warm you—at least, it would seem so. For my own part, the little wit I possess is frostbitten, like the point of my nose—if so blunt a nose can be said to have a point—and, if I tarry here much longer, I am like to lose both wit and nose."

"Thou shouldst have advised me of thy sorry case before, good fellow," said the king, laughing. "Let us in, sweet cousin; or, while we discourse here at our ease, this dainty gentleman will be turned to ice."

"Of a verity shall I, my gracious liege," rejoined Fowler; "an I be not speedily delivered

hence, I shall be fixed to the spot like yonder frozen fountain."

"And albeit thou mightst ornament the garden as a statue, I cannot afford to lose a good servant, so I will take compassion upon thee. Come, fair coz."

So saying, the young king gave his hand to the Lady Jane, and led her towards the entrance of the palace, followed by Fowler, upon whose features the anticipation of a warm fire and a plentiful repast had produced a very pleasurable expression.

VI.

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LORD PROTECTOR AND SIR
THOMAS SEYMOUR, AND HOW IT WAS ADJUSTED.

THE privy garden was bounded on the north by a long stone gallery, extending from the Lanthorn Tower to the Salt Tower, and communicating by a corridor with the royal apartments. From an upper window in this gallery two persons had for some time been looking down upon the youthful pair, and the window luckily being open, no part of their discourse escaped them. They listened to it with the greatest attention, and both seemed equally well pleased with what they heard.

Though these eavesdroppers were wholly unobserved by the young monarch and his companion, they were not unnoticed by Fowler, who, having nothing else to do, was casting his eyes about in every direction; but, as he recognised in them the Marquis of Dorset, the Lady Jane's father, and Sir Thomas Seymour, he did not think it necessary to give his royal master a hint of their proximity. Moreover, a sign from Seymour, with whom he seemed to have a secret understanding, served to make him hold his tongue.

Just at the point when Edward called to his attendant to relieve him and the Lady Jane from the books, the listeners withdrew from the window, and the gallery being empty at the time, Seymour said to the marquis, with a proud smile,

"What think you of what you have heard, my lord? How stand I with his majesty? Have I overrated my influence with him?"

"Not a jot," replied Dorset. "You stand so well with your royal nephew, that it will be your

own fault if you be not the first peer of the realm."

"What! do you place me above the Lord Protector?" cried Seymour. "Bethink you that the council have given him all the power."

"I am not unmindful of it," replied the marquis; "but you have the king on your side, and unless the Lord Protector contrives to wean his highness's love from you, you must ere long gain the ascendancy."

"You are in the right, my lord of Dorset," said Seymour; "I shall both gain it and maintain it. And as I rise, others shall rise with me—that you may reckon on. A thought crossed me while listening to yon pretty pair, and I will make you privy to it. They seem made for each other. Why should they not be wedded when they arrive at a suitable age?"

"Even if I dared indulge the thought," replied the marquis, evidently well pleased by the suggestion, though striving to appear unconcerned, "his

majesty's extreme youth and my daughter's tender years forbid it."

"What is to hinder their affiancement?" rejoined Seymour. "The alliance may be brought about, I tell you, my lord. Nay, to be plain, it *shall* be brought about, if we fairly understand one another."

"Nay, good Sir Thomas, there is nothing I would not do, if I felt sure my daughter would be queen; and I will own to you, since you put it to me thus, that my lady marchioness hath broached the matter to me. Women will talk idly, as you wist. After all, the match would not be unsuitable, seeing that the Lady Jane herself is of the blood-royal."

"The match *can* be made, and *shall* be made, I repeat, my lord marquis," said Seymour; "but I must have the disposal of your daughter's hand. My plans must not be interfered with. You must commit the Lady Jane entirely to my charge."

“To your charge, Sir Thomas?” exclaimed the
marquis, greatly surprised.

“To mine,” rejoined Seymour—“that is, to the charge of my wife, when I get one. I design to marry ere long, my lord, and then I shall be able to receive your daughter.”

“Accept my congratulations, Sir Thomas,” said Dorset. “I doubt not that your choice hath been well made; nay, if it hath lighted on the very highest, it would not amaze me.”

“I cannot let you into the secret as yet, my lord,” replied Seymour, smiling; “but thus much I will tell you. My marriage will assuredly not diminish my influence with my royal nephew or with the nobility. My rule, as you wot, is to make no step save in advance. You will hold it no discredit, but the reverse, to commit your daughter to the charge of her who may, perchance, condescend to take me for a husband.”

“Methinks I can read your riddle, Sir Thomas, but I will not try,” observed Dorset. “Enough,

that you have convinced me. Have I your permission to consult the marchioness on this important matter?"

"Not as yet, my lord," rejoined Seymour. "Women are ill at keeping a secret; and though my lady marchioness be the discreetest of her sex, yet hath she, I doubt not, a certain proneness to talk, given her by nature, which would render her an unfit depositary of a matter of this moment. Till all be settled, I must enjoin profound secrecy. I will give you a hint when to speak. Till then, let a seal be placed upon your lips.—But see! the king and the Lady Jane are entering the gallery. Let us hasten to pay our devoirs to his majesty."

The undisguised delight manifested by the young king on seeing his favourite uncle would have satisfied the Marquis of Dorset of the place held by Seymour in his royal nephew's affections, if the conversation he had just overheard in the garden had left that cautious nobleman any doubt on the subject.

Hearing quick footsteps behind him, Edward turned to ascertain whence they proceeded, and the instant he beheld Sir Thomas, he quitted the Lady Jane's hand, which he had hitherto retained, and disregarding all ceremony—perhaps even forgetting in the impulse of the moment that ceremony was needful—he flew to meet his uncle, and without allowing him time to make any obeisance, or utter a word of remonstrance, he sprang towards him, and threw his arms affectionately round his neck.

Never, perhaps, did that ambitious man's heart beat higher than when he returned his royal nephew's fond embrace. He felt the effect produced by the demonstration on Dorset and his daughter, and though scarcely able to repress his exultation, he feigned to be overwhelmed by the king's condescension.

"Your majesty honours me far too much," he said. "Near as I am to you by relationship, dear as you are to me as a nephew, I am bound to re-

mind you that the distance between us is much greater than it was, and that the marks of affection which you have been accustomed to lavish upon me, and for which I shall ever feel proud and grateful, ought now, by right, to be discontinued."

"Why so, gentle uncle?" rejoined Edward. "You do not love me less because I am king, do you? Certes, my love for you is not diminished by the circumstance. Wherefore should I put a mask upon my regard? Rather let me rejoice that I am now better able to prove its strength."

"I want words to thank your highness," said Seymour, with every appearance of the most fervent gratitude; "but the preference for me, which you so graciously exhibit, will, I fear, be distasteful to your new governor, who will expect you to reserve all your affection for him."

"I see not why he should; but if he does, he will be disappointed," rejoined Edward. "I may

show him obedience, but I am not bound to give him the first place in my regard. I shall never love him so well as you, gentle uncle; that I can promise him. I have not yet had an opportunity of telling you how much my satisfaction was marred yesterday by learning that the council had not chosen you as my governor. Meseems I ought to have been consulted on the matter."

"Had your grace loved me less, or had I been less deserving of your love, because not so entirely devoted to you as I am, the council might—nay, would—have chosen me. But your uncle Hertford viewed me with a jealous eye, and the council were governed by his opinion."

"So I guessed," replied the king. "My lord of Hertford has gone too far. He will gain nothing by his opposition to my expressed desires. He knew full well whither my inclinations tended."

"And therefore 'twas he thwarted them," rejoined Seymour. "Your highness must dissemble

your regard for me, if you would keep peace between me and the Lord Protector."

"I hate dissimulation," said Edward, "and 'twill be hard to practise it. Yet I will try to do so to prevent all chance of difference betwixt you and my lord of Hertford, which would be greatly to be deplored."

"May it please your grace, his highness the Lord Protector comes this way," said the Marquis of Dorset, stepping forward.

As he spoke, the Earl of Hertford was seen advancing from the corridor, already described as communicating with the state apartments of the palace. From the magnificence of his apparel, and the splendour of his train, the Lord Protector would appear to have assumed a perfectly regal state. Preceded by a gentleman usher, and followed by a throng of esquires, henchmen, and pages, in superb habiliments, he was accompanied by the Constable of the Tower and Lord Lisle. His deportment was haughtier than it used to be,

and now that he felt secure of his position, he seemed determined to assert his importance to the full.

"On my fay!" exclaimed Edward, "my uncle bears him bravely. One would think he were king, and not Lord Protector."

"Lord Protector is only another name for king, your highness," observed Seymour, dryly.

"Stay with me, gentle uncle," said Edward. "His highness looks angry. I hope he will not chide me."

"Chide you, my liege!" exclaimed Seymour, almost fiercely. "He will not dare!"

"I am not so sure of it," rejoined Edward. "But stand nigh me, and then I shall not heed him."

"I do not quit your person without your majesty's commands," answered Seymour.

As he drew nearer, it was evident that the Lord Protector was much chafed, and unable to conceal his displeasure. Sir John Gage addressed some

observations to him, to which he made a very brief reply, keeping his eye all the while intently fixed upon the king and Sir Thomas. The latter hoped there might be an explosion of rage on the part of his brother, by which he could not fail to profit, but Hertford was too wary to damage himself by any such display of passion.

Making way for the Lord Protector and his train, the Marquis of Dorset and the Lady Jane Grey stationed themselves near Edward, while the luckless Fowler, who had not yet been dismissed, remained standing behind the young monarch. Sir Thomas Seymour did not move from his royal nephew's side, but drew himself up to his full height, as if prepared for the encounter.

Arrived at the proper distance from the king prescribed by court forms, the Constable of the Tower and Lord Lisle came to a halt; but the Lord Protector stepped forward, and after a profound salutation, which was courteously returned by his royal ward and nephew, said, with forced

composure, "I have just been to your grace's chamber, and it greatly surprised me to learn from your chaplain that you had gone forth, nearly an hour ago, almost unattended, to walk and read within the privy garden. Permit me to observe to your highness that such a proceeding, not being altogether in accordance with princely decorum and needful self-restraint, it will be incumbent upon you, henceforth, to keep your room until I am able to wait upon you, when I will decide how it is meet your majesty should go forth, and whither."

"By Heaven! he will have your grace in leading-strings next," muttered Seymour.

"Does your highness mean to deny me all freedom of action?" cried Edward, somewhat sharply. "May I not walk forth at any hour I please—especially when disengaged? If so, I had better be back at Hertford than a prisoner in the Tower."

"Far be it from me to place any restraint upon

your highness's movements," rejoined the Lord Protector; "and if it be your pleasure to walk forth early, you shall have no interference from me. Only I must give directions that you be properly attended, and that no one"—and he glanced menacingly at his brother—"be allowed to approach you without my consent."

"No one has approached me except my cousin, the Lady Jane Grey, and my uncle, Sir Thomas," rejoined the king. "Fowler will explain all to your highness if you question him."

"That will I," replied the gentleman of the privy-chamber, advancing a few steps, and bowing profoundly. "The Lady Jane Grey came forth to read in the garden, and there encountered his highness, who was similarly engaged. It would have done your highness good to see how little those two exalted personages heeded the cold, though I was half perished by it."

"What makes the Lady Jane Grey abroad so early?" demanded the Lord Protector, bending his

brows upon Dorset. "You should keep her within her chamber, my lord. The privy garden is for the king's sole use, and none but he may enter it."

"I am well aware of that, your highness," replied the marquis. "I knew not that my daughter had so trespassed, and am sorry for it. Bear in mind what the Lord Protector has said, Jane."

"Doubt it not," she replied, meekly. "I am not likely to forget the reproof administered by his highness; but it was in ignorance that I offended."

"You will walk in the privy garden whenever you list, Jane, so long as you remain in the Tower," said Edward, taking her hand. "I, the king, give you permission—let who will say you nay. You need not fear disturbing me, for I shall go there no more."

The Lord Protector bit his lips, and looked perplexed; but perceiving that his brother was enjoying his confusion, he turned his rage against him.

"How is it that I find you with the king, sir?" he demanded, sharply.

"Because I chance to be with his highness when you seek me, brother. I know no better reason," replied Seymour, coolly.

"I do not seek you, but I find you where I would not have you," rejoined Hertford, sternly. "Take heed, sir. As governor of the king's person, it is for me, and for me alone, to decide who is fit, or unfit, to approach him. I do not deem you a judicious counsellor, and therefore forbid you to come nigh his grace without my sanction."

The only answer vouchsafed by Seymour was a disdainful smile.

Still more enraged, the Lord Protector went on: "After this warning, if you seek by any indirect means to obtain an interview with his highness, I will have you before the council, to whom you shall answer for your disobedience to my mandates."

Seymour glanced at his royal nephew, whose spirit being now roused, he promptly responded to the appeal.

"Your highness is mistaken," said Edward, addressing the Lord Protector with great firmness; "my entirely-beloved uncle Sir Thomas always gives me the best advice, and such as your grace and the council must approve, if you were made acquainted with it. I will not be debarred of his society. Tell the council so. Nay, I will tell them so myself, if needed."

"There are some of the council now present, who will doubtless report to their colleagues what your highness hath declared," said Seymour, glancing at the Constable of the Tower and Lord Lisle.

"Assuredly the council will take the matter into immediate consideration, if his majesty shall express any such desire," said Sir John Gage; "but bound as they are to uphold the authority of him they have appointed governor to his grace, I can little doubt their decision. I trust, however, that

his highness the Lord Protector, in his wisdom and discretion, will withdraw the interdict he hath imposed on his brother Sir Thomas Seymour—the rather that it seems to me harsh and uncalled for, and liable to censure.”

“I am of the same opinion with yourself, Sir John,” said Lord Lisle. “If this interdict is bruited abroad, it will be said, and with apparent reason, that there is little brotherly amity between his majesty’s uncles.”

“I would not have that said, since it is not the truth—at least, so far as I am concerned,” rejoined Hertford. “I therefore yield to your advice, Sir John Gage, which is ever judicious as honest, and leave my brother free intercourse, as heretofore, with my royal ward, only cautioning him not to put into his majesty’s head a misliking of the government of the realm, or of my doings, so as to deprive my authority of its weight, and my counsels of their proper effect.”

"That I will promise for Sir Thomas," said Edward. "May I not, gentle uncle?"

"Indeed you may, my gracious liege," replied Seymour. "I will instil nothing into your mind but what is right and just, and any influence I may possess with your highness will ever be directed towards preparing you for the exercise of the power you are one day fully to assume. Such conduct the council and his highness the Lord Protector cannot fail to approve."

"I am heartily glad you are reconciled, my good uncles both," said Edward, looking from one to the other, "and I trust no further difference will arise between you on my account, or any other."

VII

OF THE AFFRONT OFFERED BY QUEEN CATHERINE PARR TO
THE COUNTESS OF HERTFORD; AND HOW UGO HARRINGTON
WAS SENT TO CONDUCT THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH TO THE
TOWER.

THE reconciliation between the two Seymours was so evidently hollow, that it imposed on no one—not even upon their royal nephew. The arrogant and domineering tone suddenly adopted by the Lord Protector towards his brother would scarcely have been brooked by Sir Thomas, even if his nature had been less fiery; while the haughty and insolent manner of the younger Seymour was equally intolerable to Hertford, who now seemed

to expect the submission ordinarily paid to the will of a sovereign. Instead of being allayed, therefore, their animosity was merely masked, and threatened a fresh and more decided outbreak.

Though quite aware how matters stood with his uncles, the amiable young monarch fondly persuaded himself he could keep peace between them; but besides having to deal with impracticable subjects, he himself unwittingly heightened the discord. From the ingenuousness of his nature, and from his extremely affectionate disposition, he was utterly unable to disguise the preference he felt for his younger uncle, and instead of soothing the Lord Protector's irritation, he still further exasperated him against one whom he was unable to regard in any other light than that of a dangerous rival. Already Hertford had resolved to remove his brother, as soon as opportunity offered: already Sir Thomas Seymour had determined, at any cost, to supplant the Lord Protector.

Another grand banquet was given that day, to

which the young king, with the Lord Protector, the council, and all the nobles, knights, and ladies within the Tower, sat down. It was served with all the profusion and state of the times. A long grace in Latin was delivered by the Tower chaplain, both before and after the meal, to which Edward listened with devout attention, distinctly pronouncing the word "Amen," on both occasions, at the close of the prayer. The young king would willingly have dispensed with the services of the numerous marshals and ushers, the officious cup-bearers and other officers of the table, but he endured their attendance with a very good grace. Excessively temperate in his habits, Edward drank nothing stronger than water, and did but scanty justice to the good cheer provided for him by the clerk of the kitchen.

At the commencement of the feast, a trifling incident occurred which somewhat marred the harmony of the proceedings, and gave the Lord Protector new ground of offence against his brother.

The Countess of Hertford, a very beautiful and exceedingly proud woman, had fancied herself slighted at the banquet on the preceding day by the queen-dowager, of whom, in consequence of her husband's elevation to almost regal state, she thought herself entitled to take precedence. She therefore persuaded her husband, who was greatly under her governance, to assign her a seat near the king at the next banquet. The Lord Protector gave the requisite instructions to the chief usher, and the matter appeared to be arranged; but before Lady Hertford could occupy the coveted position, the queen-dowager appeared, and haughtily declining the seat offered her by the usher, took her customary place beside the king. In the execution of this step she was aided by Sir Thomas Seymour, who prevented his sister-in-law from sitting down, and ceremoniously ushered the queen to her chair. If the affront to Lady Hertford on the previous night had been undesigned on the queen's part, the same excuse could not be offered for her

the royal board next to her father, and not so far removed from Edward but that he was able, occasionally, to exchange a word with her. Jane ate as little as the abstemious young monarch himself, a point of resemblance between them not unnoticed by Seymour, who called the queen-dowager's attention to the circumstance. Catherine appeared greatly pleased with the young maiden, and, when the repast was ended, called her to her, bidding her come with her to her private apartments, and adding graciously that she had heard much of her, and desired to know her better. The invitation was equally agreeable to Jane and to the Marquis of Dorset, though the latter fancied he could tell by whom it had been prompted.

As the king was quitting the banqueting chamber with the Lord Protector, he expressed a desire that his sister Elizabeth should be sent for to the Tower; and, furthermore, that his two preceptors, Sir John Cheke and Doctor Cox, should accompany the princess. Though the request did

not seem to be relished by his uncle, he made no objections to it; and Sir Thomas Seymour, who was evidently delighted by the notion, volunteered to go to Hertford for the princess. This proposal, however, was peremptorily rejected by the Lord Protector, but he at length agreed that his brother's esquire, Ugo Harrington, should be despatched on the errand with a sufficient escort.

"I will go seek Ugo," cried Seymour, as soon as his brother's consent had been obtained, "and despatch him at once to Hertford."

A grateful look from his royal nephew thanked him for his zeal.

But his haste to depart seemed to surprise and displease the queen-dowager, for she called out to him somewhat sharply, "Whither so fast, Sir Thomas? Methinks I have not yet dismissed you, and I counted upon your attendance for some little while longer."

"I pray you have me excused, gracious madam," he replied, in a deeply deferential tone. "I have

his majesty's commands to send off an escort to bring the Princess Elizabeth from Hertford. As soon as I have executed my commission I will return."

"Is Elizabeth coming to the Tower?" inquired Catherine, with a look of annoyance.

"Ay, madam," answered Edward. "The Lord Protector has kindly yielded to my desire to have my sister near me."

"I do not altogether approve of her highness's coming," observed Hertford; "but I cannot say 'nay' to your majesty."

While this was going on, Seymour made a profound reverence to the king, bowed with equal respect to Catherine—contriving at the same time to direct a very devoted glance towards her—and departed.

Making his way as quickly as he could through the crowd of gentlemen ushers, henchmen, grooms of the chamber, yeomen of the guard, and others that beset the corridors and passages which he

traversed, he at last reached the apartments assigned to him in the Wardrobe Tower; a structure at that time connected with a portion of the palace known as the "King's Lodgings." On entering a circular stone chamber, garnished with arras, and so richly furnished that its original dungeon-like look was completely changed, Seymour found the person of whom he was in quest seated beside a table, on which a flask of wine and a silver goblet were placed. He was singing an Italian canzonet with much taste and execution, his voice being a very fine tenor, and accompanying himself on a cittern. On seeing his patron he instantly discontinued his song, laid down the instrument, and arose.

Tall and gallant-looking, Ugo Harrington might have been considered very handsome, had not a sinister expression detracted materially from his good looks. His age was somewhat under thirty. His frame was slight but very muscular, his complexion olive, his eyes dark and quick, his teeth

beautifully even and white, and in strong contrast with his short, silky, raven-black moustaches and beard. His looks were more those of an Italian than an Englishman; and, indeed, his mother was a Florentine, while he himself had passed most of his youth in the Tuscan capital and Rome. He was richly attired in a doublet of russet velvet, with hose to match, and a furred velvet mantle was lying beside him, ready to be put on when he went forth. On the mantle were laid a long rapier and a poniard, both forming part of the gallant esquire's ordinary equipments.

Respectfully saluting Sir Thomas, he waited till the latter had hastily explained his business to him, and then declaring he was ready to proceed on the errand at once, inquired if his patron had any further commands.

"Thou shalt take a short missive from me to the princess, Ugo," replied Sir Thomas. "Thou canst make such preparations for the journey as are needful while I prepare it."

Signifying his ready assent, the esquire retired to an inner chamber, while Seymour sat down at a table on which writing materials were placed, and commenced the letter.

Apparently, what he wrote did not satisfy him, for, on reading it, he tore up the paper, and threw it into a wood fire, which was blazing cheerily on the hearth. He then began anew, but the second letter pleased him no better than the first, and was likewise consigned to the flames. The third essay proved more successful. Glancing over the note with a complacent smile, he muttered, "Methinks this will do!" and then placed it in a cover, secured the tender despatch with a silken thread, and sealed it with his signet ring.

While he was writing the third letter, his esquire, habited for the journey, returned to the room, but remained standing at a respectful distance, watching him with a very singular expression of countenance.

"Deliver this into the princess's own hands,

Ugo, at a convenient opportunity. Thou understandest?—ha!” said Seymour, giving him the missive.

“Perfettamente, monsignore,” replied Harrington. “But I confess I did not expect to be the bearer of a biglietto amoroso at this moment, when I had reason to believe your lordship to be on the brink of an engagement in another quarter.”

“Thy conclusion that it is a billet d’amour with which I have charged thee is altogether erroneous, Ugo,” said Seymour, with a smile. “I have merely indited a few words of good counsel to the princess, which I think she ought to receive before she arrives at the Tower. Presume not too much on my familiarity towards thee, amico, and, above all, never seek to penetrate my secrets. Be content to act as I direct thee, without inquiring into the motive. The time will come when thou wilt be well rewarded for any services thou mayst render me now.”

“Per Sant’ Antonio ! I am sufficiently re-

warded already," rejoined Harrington. "You have been a most munificent patron to me, monsignore."

"Nothing to what I will be, Ugo. But I must have blind obedience to my behests."

"You have only to command, monsignore. But I would I might prevail upon you to abandon this dangerous game, in which, I fear me much, you will fail; while you will assuredly jeopardise that of which you are at present secure. It seems to me a vain pursuit—*gettare la sustenza e prendere l'ombra*."

"I am resolved to risk it," cried Seymour, "be the consequences what they may. To speak truth, Ugo, I am so madly in love with the charming princess that I cannot endure the thought of yoking myself to another."

"Your lordship was wont to be more prudent," observed the esquire, shrugging his shoulders. "E perchè questa subita mutazione?—Una pollastrina non ancora buona per la tavola."

"Hold thy ribald tongue!" cried Seymbur.
"My passion may overmaster my reason. But setting aside my uncontrollable love for the princess, which would carry me to any lengths, however desperate, she is a far richer prize than the other. Possession of her hand would place me near the throne."

"You are irresistible, monsignore—that I well know—and the princess, like any other donzella, will no doubt accept you. But that will avail you little. The council will never sanction the match, and by the late king's will their consent must be obtained."

"Thou prat'st in vain, Harrington. I am immovable. Let me win the princess's consent, and all the rest will follow. And, by my halidame! I *shall* win it."

"To resolve to win, is to be sure to win, monsignore. I am all obedience. Not only shall this letter be delivered with the utmost discretion to the adorable princess with the tresses of gold,

which seem to have ensnared your lordship, and which I must needs own are most ravishingly beautiful, but I will lose no opportunity of sounding your praises in her ear."

"Note her slightest word and look when thou speakest of me, Ugo, and report them."

"You shall have every blush, every downcast look, every half-sigh of the divinity faithfully rendered, monsignore. 'Tis a pity I cannot take my cittern with me, or I might sing her a love-strain which could not fail to move her. Luckily, the enchanting princess speaks Italian fluently, and if she will only encourage me, I will converse with her in that language of love, and then I shall be able to say more than I should dare utter in our rude northern tongue."

"Go, then, and success go with thee!" cried Seymour. "Thou must reach Hertford with the escort to-night, and set forth on thy return at as early an hour to-morrow as may suit the princess. Remember, her highness's governess, Mistress

Catherine Ashley, and the king's preceptors, are to come with thee, and make it thy business to stir up the two learned drones, that they occasion thee no needless delay."

"It shall be done, monsignore," replied Harrington, buckling on his rapier, and attaching the poniard to his girdle. Throwing his mantle over his shoulder, he then followed his patron out of the chamber.

An escort of some five-and-twenty well-mounted arquebusiers was quickly provided by Seymour, who at the same time ordered his own charger to be saddled for Harrington. All being soon in readiness, the gallant esquire crossed the stone bridge at the head of his troop, rode forth from the Bulwark Gate, and took his way towards Hertford, accomplishing the distance, about one-and-twenty miles, in less than three hours, which, in those days, and in the winter season, was not bad travelling.

VIII.

HOW XIT WAS APPOINTED THE KING'S DWARF; AND HOW OG,
GOG, AND MAGOG CRAVED A BOON OF THE KING.

AT noon on the day following, the youthful king, with the Lord Protector, and all the members of the upper and lower councils, met for deliberation within the great council-chamber in the White Tower. Though Edward sat in a chair of state, and ostensibly presided over the assemblage, it was quite evident that his voice had little weight, and that the real ruler was Hertford. All measures were proposed by the Lord Protector—all questions settled by him. As a

matter of form, every matter deliberated upon by the council was submitted to the throne; but the king's advice was so asked, that the answer could only be given in the way desired by the Lord Protector.

Generally, the council seemed willing to act as Hertford desired, with the exception of the Lord Chancellor; but as yet he had merely exhibited a few symptoms of hostility, no matter having arisen of sufficient importance to justify decided opposition. Slight as they were, these indications were sufficient for the Lord Protector, and he resolved to be beforehand with his opponent, and to find a speedy pretext for his removal from the council.

After the main causes had been determined, two other matters were brought forward by the Lord Protector, which, it might naturally be presumed, would be of especial interest to the king—namely, the interment of his late royal father, and his own coronation. The former ceremonial was appointed to take place in the chapel

of Saint George, in Windsor Castle, on Wednesday, the 16th of February; while the latter was fixed for February the 20th, the Sunday after the funeral.

Some time was occupied in discussing the arrangements of both these ceremonies. Nothing was determined upon with regard to the coronation, save that, on account of the king's tender years, it ought to be materially abridged, while several important alterations in the forms were proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury—but these were left for future consideration. It was decided, however, that Henry's interment should be conducted upon a scale of unheard-of magnificence, and with all the pomp and solemnity befitting so renowned a monarch. This design was to be fully carried out, if even the exchequer should be drained by the cost.

Edward seemed comparatively indifferent to the ordering of the solemn act that was to place the crown upon his brows, but he exhibited marked


anxiety that the utmost respect should be paid to the memory of his mighty father; and entirely concurred in the propriety of making due provision to give unwonted solemnity and grandeur to his interment. "As my father was the noblest and greatest of kings during his life," he said, "so it is meet he should be borne more honourably than any other to the grave."

Little share was taken in these deliberations by Sir Thomas Seymour, but he was not idle. He employed his time in the advancement of his ulterior designs, and strove by every means in his power to ingratiate himself with his colleagues. Perceiving the covert hostility of the Lord Chancellor, he made cautious overtures to him, but these were haughtily repelled by Wriothesley, who showed no disposition to act in concert with him.

At the bottom of the ill-feeling subsisting between the two Seymours lay Lord Lisle. By his arts, he had sharpened their mutual dislike into

hatred, their jealousy into active animosity, and their want of forgiveness for slight wrong into fierce vindictiveness.

Lord Lisle had long since perceived the growing animosity between the brothers, and cautiously fostered it, in the hope that the designs of the younger brother to supplant the elder might occasion the downfall of both, and leave the stage free to himself. He therefore gave all the encouragement he could do, without committing himself, to Sir Thomas's aspiring projects, and led him to conclude he would join any cabal formed against the Lord Protector. With the elder Seymour his course was simpler. By inflaming Hertford's jealousy, and poisoning his mind against his turbulent brother, he rendered a good understanding between them impossible. It was Lisle who informed the Lord Protector that the young king had stolen from his chamber at an early hour in order to obtain a private interview with his favourite uncle ; and though the maker



of the mischief joined with Sir John Gage in the good Constable's efforts to heal the difference between the brothers, he knew he could easily undo the work, and widen the breach he pretended to repair.

So far from suspecting Lisle of treachery, or in any way distrusting him, Hertford regarded him as one of the firmest of his partisans. He knew him to be rapacious, daring, and unscrupulous, but he had no conception of the towering nature of his ambition, or of the mark at which he aimed. Deceived by the other's professions of gratitude, and fancying he had purchased his fidelity, Hertford took him entirely into his confidence, and laid open his breast to him. At this moment it would have been easy to crush such a foe ; but the Lord Protector unwittingly let the opportunity pass by.

On the present occasion, Lisle did not fail to point out to the Lord Protector that his brother was intriguing with certain members of the council

against him, and he advised him to beware. Hertford replied, with a significant look, that he would not neglect the caution.

On the breaking up of the assemblage, Edward signified his intention of visiting certain portions of the fortress, and directed Sir John Gage and his younger uncle to attend him during the inspection. The Lord Protector, whom it was needful to consult, even on so unimportant a matter, at once assented to the arrangement, but somewhat marred his royal nephew's satisfaction by offering to join the party with Lord Lisle.


The day was exceedingly fine, and very favourable for the promenade. Indeed, ever since Edward's accession to the throne, the weather had been most propitious. A sharp frost had now lasted for more than a week, and the atmosphere, though keen, was dry and wholesome. Moreover, the sun was shining brightly, and gave a pleasant and lively character to the scene, depriving the hoary walls of the keep and the grim-looking

towers surrounding the inner ward of much of their customary gloomy character. The spacious area, known as Tower-green, was at this time, as we have already shown, thronged from morn to eve; but it chanced to be more crowded than usual at the moment when Edward issued from the portals of the White Tower with his two uncles and his other attendants. As soon as the assemblage became aware of the young sovereign's presence amongst them, loud acclamations resounded on all sides, and a great rush was made in the direction of the royal party.

While Edward was moving slowly along through the crowd, his attention was caught by a fantastic little figure, which at first he took for a monkey, but on examining the grotesque object more narrowly, he found it to be human—though the smallest specimen of full-grown humanity he had ever set eyes upon. Attired in a tiny doublet of bright orange-coloured satin puffed out with white, with hose to match, the mannikin wore a scarlet

cloth mantle lined with sky-blue silk, about large enough to cover the shoulders of a Barbary ape. In his hand the little being held a flat bonnet of green velvet, which he waved enthusiastically to the king. The dwarf's features were decidedly of a simious character, the nose being flat, with wide nostrils, and having a long interval between it and the mouth, and the hair being of a tawny hue, with a marked resemblance to fur. The position occupied by this grotesque little personage was such as enabled him to overlook the royal party; he being perched on the broad shoulders of a gigantic warder, whose colossal frame towered far above the heads of the bystanders.

This tremendous son of Anak was quite as noticeable in his way as his pigmy companion—more so, perhaps. His features were broad and good humoured, and mightily pleased the king, who could not help regarding him with a certain degree of wondering admiration. Clad in the scarlet cassock of a warder, with the rose and



crown embroidered on the front and back, the giant carried a partisan almost as long as the spear of Goliath of Gath.

"Marry, that should be one of the three giants of the Tower of whom I have heard tell," observed Edward to Sir John Gage, halting as he spoke; "but who is the pigmy upon his shoulders?"

"Hath not your highness heard of Xit, the famous dwarf of the Tower?" cried the mannikin, anticipating the Constable's reply. "I am he. And it rejoices me thus to be able to wish your majesty a long and prosperous reign. Long live the noble King Edward!" he exclaimed, at the top of his shrill voice, waving his cap to the crowd, who loudly repeated the cry. "This overgrown fellow, an please your majesty, is Og—not Og, King of Basan, —but Og of the Tower," he continued, patting the giant's head, which was almost on a level with his own; "and yonder, on either side of the gate of the Cold Harbour Tower, stand his two brothers, Gog and Magog. There

is not much difference of size amongst them, but, if anything, Og, though the eldest, is the lesser of the three; howbeit, he is the broadest across the shoulders."

"If Nature hath given thee but a small frame, she appears to have furnished thee with a glib tongue, sirrah," replied the king, laughing.

"I complain not of Nature, my gracious liege," rejoined Xit. "True 'tis she hath stinted me of my fair proportions, but if she hath denied me lofty stature, she hath given me in revenge more brains than she hath lodged in the thick skull of this mighty Anakim."

"Peace, thou saucy jackanapes, or I will dash thee to the ground," cried Og, angry at the laughter of the bystanders.

"That shouldst thou not wert thou as powerful as thy namesake of Basan," cried Xit, clinging with great tenacity to his locks. "I descend not from my station unless at his highness's bidding. Remove me an thou dar'st!"

"Set him down before me," said Edward, much diverted by the scene, "and take heed thou dost not harm him."

"Hear'st thou not his majesty's command, base giant?" cried Xit, pulling him by the ear. "Place me on the ground gently and gracefully."

Thus enjoined, Og stepped forward, and bent down in order to allow Xit to spring from his shoulder.

But though the giant stooped his huge frame as much as he conveniently could, Xit had still rather a high jump to make, and his foot unluckily catching in the puffed-out wing of Og's cassock, he alighted upon his head, amid the irrepressible laughter of the beholders.

Luckily, the dwarf's head was tolerably thick, so no great damage was done him, neither was he much disconcerted. Picking himself quickly up, he rated Og for his clumsiness, sharply reproved the bystanders for their unseemly merriment, which caused them to laugh the more, and then made a

profound, and, as he conceived, courtier-like obeisance to the king.

"What office dost thou fill in the Tower, sirrah, if there be an office small enough to fit thee?" inquired Edward.

"Any office would fit me, an please your majesty, since my capacity is equal to the greatest," answered Xit, readily; "but desert, as I need not remind so wise a prince, doth not always meet reward. At this moment I am out of office, or rather, I should say, I have been unaccountably overlooked. Honours and posts have fallen on taller men's heads, but not on mine, which they would have suited equally well—mayhap better."

"Your majesty's august father always kept a fool—nay, three—to make him merry with quip and quirk," remarked Sir Thomas Seymour. "Will Somers, Sexton, and Patch, are out of date; but this conceited dandiprat might fill the place of one of them, and serve to divert your grace."

"By the rood! I like your notion well, gentle uncle," rejoined Edward, with boyish delight.

"Thou shalt be my fool, sirrah, if thou wilt," he added to Xit.

"I will be aught your majesty may deign to make me," responded the dwarf, "and I thank you, in all humility, for your goodness; but I would fain have the designation of mine office slightly changed. Half-witted buffoons, like Will Somers and his compeers, might well be styled 'fools,' seeing they were little better; but for me, I have ever been noted for sprightliness and wit, and I hope to divert your highness in a very different sort from dullards like to those."

"If thou lik'st not to be called 'court fool,' will 'court jester' suit thee better, thou malapert little knave?" asked Sir Thomas Seymour.

"It may suit me, yet I like it not," replied Xit. "If I sought to be styled 'jester' instead of 'fool,' it would prove me a great fool and a sorry jester—a jester being the greatest of fools, since every man may make game of him, which, I promise your worship, no man shall do with me."

"Aha! thou art as difficult to please as a breeding dame, thou saucy little varlet," laughed Seymour. "What title will please thee?"

- "An I be simply termed his majesty's faithful dwarf, I shall be well satisfied," returned Xit, bowing obsequiously.

"Have thy wish, then," said Edward, delighted by the mannikin's readiness. "Henceforth I take thee into my service under that designation. Thou shalt have a dwarf's wages and a dwarf's livery."

"Let my wages be full-grown, though my livery be never so scant, an please your majesty," rejoined Xit. "If my hire be proportioned to my size, it will come to little. Measure it rather by yonder giant. Howbeit, in any case, I humbly thank your highness. Grant me a sword, and my happiness will be complete."

"A bodkin would suit thee better," observed Seymour. "What should such a jackanapes as thou do with a sword?"

"Use it in his majesty's defence, and in the

maintenance of mine own honour," replied Xit, with the pride of an offended Castilian.

"Nay, if a sword will make thee happy, my cutler shall provide thee one," said the king. "Hie thee and bring those giant warders before me. I am curious to behold them."

"Your highness's commands shall be promptly obeyed," replied Xit, darting off towards the Wardrobe Tower.

"Ho there! ye dull and sluggish Titans," vociferated the dwarf, as he drew near the gateway beside which Gog and Magog were stationed. "Ho there, I say! Are ye deaf as well as stupid? Come with me instantly!"

"Wherefore should we go with thee, thou restless gad-about?" rejoined Gog, leaning on his tall partisan, and looking down good humouredly at him.

"Question not, but follow," cried Xit, authoritatively.

"Even if we cared to comply, we could not,"

rejoined Magog, the youngest and largest of the three giants. "Our post is at this gate, and we may not quit it till the guard be relieved."

"But I am sent by the king's majesty to bring you to him, rebellious Titans," cried Xit. "Obey at your peril!"

"Is this one of the gamesome little bawcock's jests, think'st thou, Gog?" said the younger giant.

"I know not," replied the other. "His majesty is yonder—but if we stir from our posts without the Lieutenant's license we shall be reprimanded."

"But my order is from a greater than the Lieutenant, or even than the Constable, and ye had best not neglect it," cried Xit, stamping his tiny foot impatiently on the ground. "Know, ye incredulous bawsons, that I am now one of the royal household."

"Nay, an thou affirmest that, I doubt all the rest," said Magog. "I stir not hence."

"Neither do I," added Gog. "Thou must

invent a better tale than this, thou false imp, to lure us from our duty."

"On my soul! your stupidity is on a par with your stature, ye huge puzzle-pates," cried Xit. "Ye are keeping the king's majesty waiting all this time. Ye shall ride the wooden horse and brook the stinging lash, if you detain me much longer."

"An it be true that the king hath sent for us, we ought to go," observed Magog, with a perplexed look.

"Assuredly," returned Gog; "but we have no certitude on the point. Ha! here comes Og to help us in the dilemma. What must we do, brother?" he added, as the third giant approached them with mighty strides.

"Stay where you are," replied Og. "The king will be here anon. Nay, Xit hath not deceived you," he added, seeing them look at the dwarf; "he was sent to bring you into the royal presence,

but since then, his majesty having been informed by the Constable of the Tower that you are on duty here, would not have you disturbed, but is coming hither himself."

"His highness will be here in a trice," said Xit, perceiving that the royal party was drawing nigh. "Take pattern by me, and demean yourselves properly."

In another moment, Edward and his attendants came up. The three gigantic warders were now standing together, and as their big burly frames were bent towards the youthful and fragile-looking king, it was like three sturdy oaks inclining to a slender reed.

"A boon! a boon! an please your majesty!" exclaimed the three giants, in concert. "A boon we crave at your royal hands."

"Name it, good fellows," replied Edward, well pleased by their appearance.

"Fain would we be allowed some part, however

humble, at your majesty's approaching coronation," said Magog, who acted as spokesman for the others.

"The request is granted as soon as preferred," replied Edward, graciously. "The lord chamberlain shall assign you a fitting part in the ceremony."

"Gramercy, my gracious liege," cried the three giants together.

"Bestow upon them ten broad pieces each, Sir John," said Edward to the Constable, "as an earnest of our future favour."

"Your majesty is over-bountiful," rejoined Magog, modestly. "Howbeit, I make bold to say that your highness hath not three trustier subjects than my brothers and myself."

"Not three taller subjects, certes," rejoined Edward; "and I doubt not trusty as tall. There must be no pageant or court show without these lusty fellows," he added to Sir John Gage.

"'Tis what they are specially fit for, my gracious liege," said the Constable. "Your august father loved to see their burly figures in a pageant."

"Your majesty's condescension makes us proud," said Gog. "We shall hold our heads higher ever afterwards."

"No occasion for that," rejoined Xit. "Marry, your heads are too much i' the air already."

"Let us now to the Bloody Tower, good Sir John," said Edward to the Constable. "You promised to show me the chamber where the murder of the young princes was done."

"I will conduct your highness thither at once," replied Gage.

"Nay, I must have thy company, my merry little knave," cried Edward, seeing Xit look at him beseechingly. "I have conceived a liking for thee. Thy humour pleases me. Follow in my train."

Made supremely happy by the permission thus graciously accorded him, Xit strutted after the royal party like a peacock with its tail displayed in the sun.

END OF VOL. I.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.



1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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